

THE  
**New Practice of Piety:**

Writ in Imitation of  
**Dr. Browne's Religio Medici:**

— K — OR,

**The Christian Virtuoso:**  
DISCOVERING  
*The Right Way to Heaven,*  
Between all EX TRE A M S:

Together with

I. The Character of a Moderate (or Right) *Christian*, in all the Degrees of Perfection attainable in this World.

II. A Specimen of Holy *Living* and *Dying*; copied from the Lives of the Primitive Christians.

III. The *Secret Diary*, Shewing how the Author intends to govern his Thoughts, Words and Actions, for the remaining part of his Life.

The whole being a *System of Uncommon Thoughts* (Speculative and Practicall) extracted from the **Christian EXPERIENCES** of Forty Years.

By a Member of the New Athenian Society:

**The Second Edition.**

Dedicated to the Learned Mr. **JOHN LOCK**, Author of the Essay upon Humane Understanding.

May we know what this New Doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? Acts 17. 19.

L O N D O N:

Printed for *S. Malthus*, in London-House-Yard, at the West-End of *St. Pauls*. 1704.





*To the Learned*

**Mr. JOHN LOCK,**

**Author of the ESSAY**

***Upon Humane Understanding.***

**SIR,**

**M***Y Ambition to have your Worthy Name standing in the Front of my Book, was to induce the World to be at least Civil to it. I cou'd indeed have Dedicated these Sheets to some Men of High Title, but they make but small Reckoning of such Presents as these; in regard they are often rather above their Understanding, or disagreeing from their Genius; but for my part, I prefer Piety before Birth, and Learning before Dignity; and consequently chose rather to Address this New Practice of Piety to Mr. Lock, than to any other person whatsoever.*

*Sir,*

*The New Athenian Society ( of which I own my self an unworthy Member ) have ever had an extraordinary Value for your Person and Writings; and I had sooner paid my Respects to you in this Publick manner, had I thought any thing less than a New Practice of Piety cou'd deserve so*

## The DEDICATION.

Great a Name as yours to be prefixt to it, a Name that is equally Rever'd and Lov'd by all Pious and Learned Men.

Sir, Great is the Contention about the Right Way to Heaven; but of the many Religions Profess'd in this Land our Spiritual Guides have sufficiently prov'd, that there is only One True Religion, and that the Protestant is it; and therefore I have endeavour'd in this Book to draw Right Christianity into a narrow Room, as a vast World into a small Map; to the end, that with a little Travel much may be Discover'd.

I hope, Sir, 'twill no ways offend you (tho' you have been settled in the Right way to Heaven for 60 Years) that a Review of matters belonging to Religion shou'd be thought needful; for since the Scripture doth premonish us, that Heresies must of necessity be, and False Teachers wou'd come to disturb the Peace and Unity of the Church: It is doubtless necessary to try which of all these Spirits are of God, and which is that Right Christianity so plainly shewn in the Holy Scriptures.

In which important Search, the Reading of this Book, will ( by Gods Grace ) discover such Light to discern Truth from Falshood, and such Directions to find out the Strait Gate, which only leadeth to Eternal Life, as may satisfie the most Scrupulous, especially if they Read with that Impartial Eye and Humility of Spirit, as they ought to do, who desire to see the Truth between all Extreame.

Having therefore ( amongst the Great Variety of Religions ) discover'd the Right Way to Heaven, I shou'd be wanting to my self in so Nice a

Under

## The DEDICATION.

*Undertaking, if I did make choice of any other Patronage than yours, whose Refin'd Conversation has rankt you in the Number of Primitive Christians: Others owe their Honour to Great Titles, you to Piety and Learning; their Conquest is of others only, yours of others and your self too: In a word, all the Addition that can be made to your Pious Character, is a continuing to Live as you now do: Dr. Burthog observing this, obtain'd your Patronage to his Ingenious Essay upon Reason: But tho I can't merit your Favour as he did, yet from your Condescending Goodness, I raise to my self a Hope, that you will dart a Ray to Quicken and Cherish a Search after Right Christianity; and I'm the more encourag'd to hope this, as it owes its very Essence to your self, being compos'd of your Heroick Vertues; your Large Soul is so Brim-full of Knowledge and Piety, that he that Converseth with Mr. Lock, need not peruse this Book, for you two differ in nothing, save in the Lively Grace which all Originals have above their Copies: Or if my Christian Virtuoso has mistook his way ( of which you are a proper Judge ) look into your self, and form him a New out of your own Bosom, where Perfections dwell to which I can never Penetrate.*

*Worthy Sir, I intend not by this Address meet-  
ing to satisfy an Old Formal Custom of Dedica-  
tions, but to tell you and others, what Esteem I have  
for a Pious, Sober and Peaceable Genius, such  
as you seem to be Inspired with; especially in this  
contentious Age, when Charity seems to be swallow'd  
up by a bitter Zeal, and Right Christianity pin'd  
and scoriwel'd into a bare Skelleton, thro' the Idleness,*



## The DEDICATION.

or Security, or Impertinence of its Professors : I am mightily pleas'd with that Impartial Censure, which a Reverend Bishop of our Church hath given upon his Polemical Studies : I shall not be asham'd, saith he, to say, that I am weary and toyled with rowing up and down in the Seas of Questions, which the Interests of Christendom have Commenced ; and in many Propositions ( I am heartily perswaded ) I am not certain that I am not Deceived, and I find that Men are most confident of those Articles which they can so little Prove, that they never made Question of them. But I am most certain (*continues this good Prelate* ) that by Living in the Religion and Fear of God, in Obedience to the King, in the Charities and Duties of Communion with my Spiritual Guides, in Justice and Love with all the World, in their severall Proportions ; I shall not fail of that End which is Perfective of Humane Nature, and which will never be obtain'd by Disputing. — *So that 'tis clear from Bishop Taylor's words, Matter of Difference in Opinion, is often but an abatement of Devotion ; but words appertaining to Piety, are sweeter than the Honey or the Honey-Comb : Sure I am, the time will come, when a Life well Liv'd, and Transacted in a quiet Pursuit of our Proper Duties, will be a better Cordial than all the Wrangling Disputes, of either Churchmen or Dissenters. That it were to be wish'd, we had less contending in Matters of Controversie, which avail little to Godliness, and more sincere Practice of Christian Piety ; that we had less Questioning in general, and*



## The DEDICATION.

*in particular, less Curious Prying into Sacred Mysteries, and more Religious Preparation for Heaven; that there were more Moderation amongst Protestants, that ( as my Lord Russel expresses it ) Dissenters were less Scrupulous, and Churchmen less Severe : For we may consider, that after all the stir about Occasional Conformity, Re-Ordination, &c. the Devotion of most is but SO, SO ; for the Heaps of Volumes that treat upon this Subject, how do they all in a manner tend only to matter of Contradiction ?*

*But the aforesaid Bishop has set us in The Right Way to Heaven, and what he observes concerning Practical Vertue, and the Ill Success of Disputing, shou'd make us all strive for an Union in Religion, which King William ( as a Common Father to all his People ) desired so much, that 'twas part of his daily Prayer,*

*Lord Bless and Preserve  
thy Church, dispersed over  
the Face of the Earth, Re-  
store to it UNITY and  
Concord in the acknow-*

*Lately Publish'd by  
the Bishop of Norwich  
and sold by W. Barns,  
at the Crown in Pall-  
Mall.*

*ledgement of the Truth ; and the Practice of  
Righteousness and Goodness : Remove out of  
it all Divisions and Dissentions, all Tyranny  
and Usurpation over the Minds and Conscien-  
ces of Men : Lord, Pity the Distractions, and  
Heal the Breaches of that part of thy Church  
which thou hast Planted in these Kingdoms :  
Take away those mistakes and mutual Exaspe-  
rations which cause so much Distemper and Di-  
sturbance and Restore to it Piety and Vertue,  
'PEACE*

## The DEDICATION.

‘PEACE and Charity; Endue the Pastors and  
‘Governours of it, with the Spirit of True Re-  
‘ligion and Goodness: Give them Wisdom to  
‘discern the best and most proper means of  
‘composing the Differences of this miserably  
‘Divided Church; the Heart to Endeavour it,  
‘and by thy Blessing upon their Endeavours, the  
‘Happines to Effect it.

*Thus Pray'd King William (of Ever Glorious  
Memory) for an Union in Religion amongst his  
Protestant Subjects: And seeing we have lately seen  
Heads of Agreement Assented to by the United  
Ministers (formerly call'd Presbyterian and Con-  
gregational) why might not those Heads be enlarg'd  
to a Comprehension, or a General Union a-  
mongst Protestants.*

*Our Sovereign Lady (who is no ways behind  
King William, for Compassion and Tendernefs to  
all Her Subjects) does also desire an Union in Re-  
Nov. 9. 1703. ligion; for in her Speech to the Parlia-  
ment, She's pleas'd to say, ‘I want words  
‘to expresse to you, my Earnest desires of seeing  
‘all my Subjects in Perfect Peace and UNION  
‘among themselves: I have nothing so much at  
‘Heart as their General Wellfare and Happi-  
‘ness: Let me therefore desire you all, that you  
‘would carefully avoid any Heats or Divisions,  
‘that may disappoint me of that Satisfaction, and  
‘give Encouragement to the Common Enemies  
‘of our Church and State.*

*And as at the opening of this Parliament Her  
Majesty exprest her Earnest Desire of seeing all Her  
Subjects in PERFECT UNITY amongst them-  
selves,*

## The DEDICATION.

ives; so at the Proroguing of it, She persists in the same EARNEST DESIRE, Advising the Commons, 'to go down to their several Counties, so Disposed to Moderation and Unity, as becomes all those who are joyned together in the same Religion and Interest. And as our Gracious Queen desires to see all her Subjects in PEACE and UNION among themselves; so I believe the Moderate Clergy wou'd greatly Rejoyce to see all Her Majesties Subjects United in one Church, for in a Letter, lately sent by an Eminent Conformist, to his Kinsman, a Dissenter, in these words, 'As for the Strangeness you charge me with, you wou'd be more just, to impute it to my seldom coming to London, and my short stay there, then to any Difference in our Opinions; for I think a Man may spend an hour or two with a Relation, without any Disputes upon Controversial Subjects; and I can Assure you, That the POWER of Modeness, is that which I have a much greater Regard to, than the FORMS of it.

But notwithstanding this seeming Concurrence of all Parties for an Accommodation in the Disputable Matters relating to Divine Worship, yet I much Question whether UNION in Religion will e'er be effected in our Days; for to be sure the Devil and the High Flyers, do all they can to oppose it: However, I have undertaken in this Book, to reduce the points in Controversie to so short a Compass, that I can't think Moderate Men will dissent from 'em.

But seeing the High Flyers and the Moderate

B

Men



## The DEDICATION.

Men, are Persons not so well understood as they shoud be, 'tis fit I shoud further explain what I mean by em

By *High Flyers*, I mean a sort of Soaring Politicians, that Sin against all the Prospects of Sense and Reason; they are Credulous Bigots that never think; and tho' they pretend to be Sons of the Church, they are in Reality, but half Papists and half Protestants. Their Charity to Dissenters waxeth colder and colder and their Zeal (tho *Late A-la-mode*) is a little too hot; for 'tis not that Holy Fire which is kindled by a Coal from the Altar but is that *Ignis Fatuus*, or *Willd fire*, which but a Meteor piec'd up of Malignant Vapours. Had they liv'd in the time of the Ten Persecutions, what clean work wou'd they have made with those *Nonconforming Christians*? Our Gracious Queen desires perfect Peace and Union amongst all her Protestant Subjects; but these Fiery Mad-caps do now sling about their Bombs and their Granadoes against the Phanticks, as if they were storming a *Conventicle*, every word is a Snap-Dragon, or a Flash of Lightning, enough to singe all the Periwigs in the Congregation. — Strange! — That such Fiery Men should be for *Passive Obedience*! But that a Vertue which they only Preach to others, never Practice themselves. — *This I take to be the True Character of the High Flyers.*

But the Moderate (or Right Christian) is a Man of a different Principle; for by Moderate Men, I don't mean Luke-warm Professors, but such as are Zealous to serve God, and (tho members of the Church



## The DEDICATION.

Church of England, or any other Protestant Church ) do cordially Embrace with the Extended Arms of Good Will, whoever are dignified with the Image of Piety, tho not distinguished with their own Superscription. — *own these Moderate Men are branded with the odious Name of Trimmers; but seeing Faith is above Reason, I wonder not to see even the Best Temper'd Christians, think that which is not their own Religion, to be therefore Ridiculous. However the Variety which we behold in the Universe, is not a Deformity but its Beauty; as the Eye is more delighted with a Landskip, which invites it with the grateful Interpositions of Hills and Valleys; Woods and Champion Grounds, than if it were let out, to see it self in the Uniformity of a waste Horizon, Empty Prospect; so is the Truly Pious Soul, more surpriz'd with the Glory of the Christian Religion, when Various Apprehensions agree in the same Substantial Holiness, one Star differing from another in Glory, yet all shining with a light borrow'd from the same Fountain. And therefore ( as I said before ) I can't think any Moderate Man will dislike the Subject of this Book, as my design is to put an end to needless Controversies, and to perswade us all to an Union in Religion; but alas, Sir, We are come to that height of Madness, that if a Man will not be Drunk, or Swear, streight he is a Dissenter: If you ask such as these, Of what Religion they are? They will tell you they are Protestants of the Church of England. — Ask 'em, Why then they side with Young Perkin, who is a Papist? Because,*

## The DEDICATION.

*quo' they, the Papists are better than the Presbyterians. — Ask 'em how so? Because, cry they, the Presbyterians are worse than the Papists; Nay, such senseless and unreasonable Bigots are some Churchmen, that it is not enough for a Moderate Man to own Episcopacy, to hear Common Prayer constantly, to receive the Sacrament according to our Church, unless he will say and do in every thing as the High Flyers; he is a Phanatick, an Occasional Conformist, &c. Hence such a Bustle, such a Clutter, such a Hurry, hence so much canvassing at Elections, such Bauling out St. George for the Church, as if all lay at stake, when nothing is in danger: I have heard in a late Election of Parliament Men, a Clergy-Man of some Note, usher'd in a Company of Electors, Crying Out, No Popery, no Presbytery; the sober hearers, wondering what he meant, none looking towards Presbytery, being in any Nomination, or under any Pretensions to the Election. That therefore Men might no longer be Abused with Empty Noises and Clamours; 'twas high time for some Christian Virtuoso, to discover who that Right Christian is, that deserves our Vote and Esteem. I wou'd have a True Churchman to be one that is able and ready to give account of his Faith clearly to every one that asks him; and if all those of other Perswasions were able to do the like; I think all such as own the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and their Rule, wou'd quickly be agreed. If we of the Church of England have a Latitude to give to Men a further Power in the things of God than others can, we have no reason*

## The DEDICATION.

son to be angry with the Dissenters that are more straitned; for we have no reason at all, to cry out against the Pope, for his claim to Infallibility, if we will not allow, that we or any Church may be mistaken.

However, the Souls of Men are Precious, and I have here said my utmost to direct us all in that Right Way that leads to Heaven, and I verily think, wou'd all Parties agree to lay by their Bigottry and Prejudice, an Union in Religion, wou'd soon be Effected. However, that I might contribute all I can to this Blessed Work.

In the First (or Speculative Part) of this Book I endeavour to imitate Dr. Brown, in his Religio Medici; I own I am far from matching that Brave Original, yet I found it easier and more proper for me to write after Dr. Brown's careless way, than to pretend to any Form or Method wherein I might commit a thousand mistakes; but in this, some of 'em will pass like his, for Uncommon Errors, and please for the sake of Novelty.—As for my self, my vanity never prompted me, to be a Standard Bearer to any either NEW SECT, or Old Heresie; and I pity such as Love to Live like Pew-keepers in the House of God, busied in seating others, without ever providing a Room for themselves. If then my Speculative Part, does offend such as are truly Pious, it will much grieve me, and it shall always be my endeavour for the time to come, rather to drop Tears for my own sins, than to upbraid other Men with theirs. But tho' Nice Speculations in Religion are not so Necessary; and are more dangerous than Sincere



## The DEDICATION.

Practice (for our Piety and Principles scarce ever grow after they begin to be too Curious) yet who knows but my Watch goes right, albeit it agree not with the Publick Clock of the City, especially where the Sun of Righteousness hath not by pointing clearly the Dial of Faith, shewed which of the two are in the Error. —

But however New, or Orthodox, my Speculations are, I intend not to gain to my self the Title of Reformer, by Publishing of them, seeing most of these have had the same Fate with that Curious Painter, who having drawn an Excellent FACE, as well as cou'd have been expected from the Smoothest Mirror, did therefore dish it afresh upon the dislike of every New Spectator, till at last he Reform'd it from being any ways like to the Original. But suppose our Christian Vertuoso has been too CURIOUS in drawing the Curtain of Holy Mysteries, to see what passes in Heaven, tho I wont defend such Bold Speculations (for we shou'd not be curious to know more than is Reveald) yet I find there be such Prying Christians amongst us as wou'd not be ignorant of Gods Secrets; as if it were a matter of nothing to be Saved, unless we also know what God will have Unknown; these are Bold Querists indeed, that to be cur'd of the Athenian Itch, go to the Devil for Brimstone. For my own share, I think that sufficient, which God hath thought enough for me to know (and I hope I have kept within Bounds in these Speculations) And do only seek to know what is just Necessary for Practice: What that is



## The DEDICATION.

is coucht in a few words, Fear God and keep his Commandments, is the whole Duty of Man. *Eccles. 12. 13.* And therefore King James was much in the Right, when he told us, 'Disputations were the Scab of the Church. We shou'd not make the Way to Heaven, more Difficult than really it is; and therefore when I meet with Doubts that I can't Resolve, I have recourse to this sure Decider of all Differences, — Dominus Dixit; — and that makes me easie; for the Bible has cur'd my Vain Curiosity, and I am satisfi'd with PLAIN TRUTH. — 'Tis Practical Divinity that must bring us to Heaven. When Mr. Hoadly and Mr. Calamy, have vented all their Subtilty and Nice Reasoning against each other, many Pious Men will judge it no other than a Witty Scolding, but a Vain Curiosity; and a Contention who shall out do each other, has been so much the Sin of the Present Age, that it has given occasion to a Learned Writer to say, 'That (it was his Opinion) Disputing and Wrangling wou'd be a considerable part of the Torments of Hell.

However, To cure this Athenian Itch, in the Practical (or Second Volume) I have added a MAP of Right Christianity (to warn us of all Extreams) and insure our Passage for Heaven, and that my Readers might have a NEW Directory for Holy Living and Dying, have intermixt both First and Second Volume, with such Variety of Original Manuscripts, as Entitles my Book The New Practice of Piety, which (tho compleated in Two Volumes) shall be Publish'd in Four Parts for the ease of the Poorer Buyer, and as Two of the  
Parts

## The DEDICATION.

*Parts relate to the Speculative Part of Divinity; and the other Two to the Practick, there shall be added a Distinct Table to each Volume, for the sake of those that will Bind them up when the Works Compleat.*

*It had been well (for the High Flyers) if this Christian Moderator had been Published some*

*Years ago, for (as Bishop Taylor observes) 'Some Men never think of Heaven, and they that do,*

*'think to go thither in such Paths 'which all the Ages of the Church did give 'Men warning of, lest they should that way 'go to the Devil. And I pray God indue us all with New Faculties of Mind, and give us Power to discern Spiritual things with Fresh Appetite: For the Right Christian discovers more Solid Comfort, and Material Support, in one Article of Faith, in one Period of the Lords Prayer, than in all the Disputes of Furious People, who take more pains to defend a Ceremony, or quarrel with the Common - Prayer, than to perswade Men to avoid Hell. But I was never any Friend to Controversie, and therefore in this Second Volume, I endeavour Only to shew what we are to Believe and Do, in the Right Way to Heaven, and what those things are, which do most require our Time and Diligence; Rescinding the Superfluities of an Ambitious and Curious Study.*

*To this end I have begun (this Practicall Part) with my own Soul, &c. and hope I have found a Clue to wind me through the Labyrinth of all Religions, and lead me directly to Heaven. — Oh the Matchless Kindness of God to Bewilder'd Sinners*

## The Preface.

Clock which a Great Prince wore in a Ring; it strikes every Hour of the Day, and agreeth with Reason, as the Dials with the Sun.

Great Books (says a Late Author) make men sometimes more Learned, seldom more Innocent; but this not only gives a Schem of Religion in Speculation, but reduceth Piety to Practice, and ( 'tis hop'd ) shews the Right Way to Heaven, between all Extreame. Then, Reader, peruse it often, and do what it directs you to; while others wrangle about Religion, do you endeavour to Practice it, for this Book hath no other Character of its worth, than that of your NEW LIFE.

But I'll forestall the Readers Impatience with no more Preface; not in the least doubting, but that upon the first Reading the following Sheets, they'll see how little they, and others, have studied the Old, and what need there was of A New Practice of Piety.

I shall only add, so far as I have gone in my New Practice of Piety, I have fairly prov'd, That the Moderate Man is the Best Christian, and that the Right Way to Heaven lyes between all Extreame; but seeing the High Flyers can't approve of such Healing Principles; to Pacifie these Gentlemen, I endeavour ( in the conclusion of these Sheets ) to Retract my Moderate Principles ( so far as I can with a good Conscience ) and this I attempt by writing — A SATYR on the House of LORDS, for not Passing the Bill against Occasional Conformity. — And as the Gentleman, who writ a Satyr on King WILLIAM, shew'd himself a Generous Friend to the Merits of that glorious Prince; so I hope ( by this Satyr ) to shew a True Concern for the Souls of the High Flyers, and if it prove the Conversion but of one Bigot, I hope he'll turn this Satyr into a Panegyrick; or at least own, That the House of Lords are in the Right Way to Heaven; and that if ever we design to get thither, we must follow their Noble Examples of Piety and Moderation; and in particular, that of the Bishop of Salisbury, who says in his Speech to the House of LORDS, ' I own I began the World on a Principle of Moderation, which I have carryed down through my whole Life, and in which I hope I shall continue to my Lives End.





## THE New Practice of Piety; &c.

**S**T. Austin says, *He that Repents, is well near Innocent*; and for that Reason I shall Recommend *A New Practice of Piety* to such as have Erred and Gone Astray.

*A New Practice of Piety*, according to my Notion of it, is, *A Becoming another Man, or New Creature*, Putting off, as to the Former Conversation, the *Old Man*, &c. or more plainly, It is a denying all Ungodliness and Fleshly Lusts, and Living Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World. — *Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a New Creature, Old things are past away, behold all things are become New.* 2 Cor. 5. 17.

If any Man would be Saved, he must first be Born again of the Holy Spirit, be Converted and become a New Creature, Holy in Heart and Life; otherwise he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.

So that if I'd Live (as well as Write) *A New Practice of Piety*, I must Conform to the Rules of Temperance and Chastity; Moderate all Inordinate Passions and Brutish Appetites, by a Religious Reason, Bridling my Tongue also, and setting a Guard upon my Outward Senses.

And that none (no not so much as my self) may doubt my sincerity in this matter, I Resolve henceforward — *To avoid every Known Sin (whether it be of Omission or Commission)* — *To Acknowledge God in all my ways.* — *To do all Things to his Glory* — *And be very Zealous in Sending others to Heaven*; for I read St. Andrew was no sooner Converted, but he strait findeth his Brother Simon, — *And he brought him to Jesus.* John 1. 41. 42.

This I call *A New Practice of Piety*. But 'tis a Folly to

## The New Practice of Piety

pretend to Live up to it, without I come to God in the Posture of a *Truly Penitent and Reform'd Believer*; that is to say, That I Truly REPENT of all the Sins of my Former Life (*whether Known or Unknown*) and have such a Godly Sorrow for 'em, as worketh the Hatred, Confession and Forsaking of 'em; for the *Leading of a New Life*, is, what in us lies, the Undoing of the Evil we have done; neither can I pretend to a *New Life*, except to a True Repentance of all my Sins, I add, — *Faith in Christ.* — *A Firm Belief of the Apostles Creed.* — *And a strict observance of the Ten Commandments, &c. or* (in fewer Words) That I stedfastly believe the *Whole Word of God*, and Square my Life and Actions according to it.

But seeing *A New Course of Piety* can never be effected, till my PRINCIPLES are as much Refin'd as my Daily PRACTICE.

I shall first present the Reader with *A Practice of Piety in Speculation*, and when I ha' run through *A System of New Thoughts* (as a Guide to my Future Life) I shall Publish the *Practical* (or *Second*) Volume of this Work, where our CHRISTIAN VIRTUOSO presents the Reader with a MAP of Right Christianity, and hopes (by looking into all Religions) has Discover'd the RIGHT Way to Heaven.

But my Present Task, is to present the Reader with *A New Practice of Piety in Speculation*; and here, the better to Imitate *Religio Medici*, I shall pry into every room of my Heart and Life, to make what Discoveries I can there; for if we consider the *Original of our several Deviations from the Right Path*, we shall find, they all proceed from our not Knowing our selves nor God; to Know our selves; therefore must be our first Care, which will lead us to the Knowledge of God; for we must needs perceive after the strictest search we can make into our own Being, how impossible 'twas for us to make our selves, that we are forced to conceive our being, to be the Gift of an Almighty Power. — Then with draw thine Attention a little, Ob my Soul from the Notice and Impressions of External Objects; View a while, with Application, the image of thy Self, within the Sphere of thy own Activity; Exert the power of Reflection upon those Acts  
which

## The New Practice of Piety.

3

which have no Affinity with the Body, and claim an Independence upon Inferiour Beings; gather thence the clear Notions of thy Nature, and how nearly thou art ally'd to the Intellectual World. The most successful Method is to Contemplate thy own Image in the mirror of Peculiar Operations, which are Exhibitive of the apparent powers and faculties of their Active Source. How Extensive are thy Capacities? the Heavens are not Commensurate; thou art grasping beyond the circuit of the 8th. Immoveable, and Balking along the Fields of the Empyreum. Thou art swifter than the Rays of Light, and out-runst the courser of the Skies; thou canst measure the stately round of a Saturn in a moment, and stretch away into Empty Space, and all this, whilst thou art Enshrin'd at Home, Clasping thy Dear Companion. How Nice the motions and turns of Thought! How Charming the Spoils which they prey upon! Thou art posses'd of a double Vertue, whence thy Thoughts roll along the Channels of Understanding and Will; the searches of the first, are for the sake of the Second, and the latter winds up the Springs of the first, especially when the Game is practicable, and rang'd within the boundaries of Good and Evil.

Reader, As bad as the Age is, there is a Retail of Men, who are no Strangers to themselves; but whether the Author of this Essay is one of those Blessed Few, is now left to thy Candid Judgment.

However, having sincerely Repented of all the ERRORS of my past Life, I am bold to Challenge the Title of a *Right Christian*, neither am I ashamed to expose my Naked Thoughts with respect to the Time that is past, or to that *New Life* I wou'd now lead; and seeing the *Right Way* to Heaven lies first in the Knowledge of our selves, I shall (*In imitation of Dr. Brown*) begin my *New Practice of Piety*, with Divine SPECULATIONS on my Birth and Parentage; and however strange my thoughts appear in the following Sheets, I hope to prove that they all contribute to a *New Practice of Piety*.

I have no reason to tax my Education, or blame those who had the care of my *Juvenile Years*; my Parents were Learned and Orthodox, and made it their Business to form my Mind, and square my Soul by the best Precepts and Purest Examples; yet when I arriv'd at Years  
of



## The New Practice of Piety.

of Maturer Judgment, I found occasion to Prune my self, and Lop off many *Excessencies*; to wipe out the Early Impressions of my Infant Years, and *unlearn* the Notions I suck'd in with my Mothers Milk; tho there were no *Legends* in the Nursery, nor *Heresies* in the Schools where I was brought up, yet my Blooming Fancy was fertile in *ERRORS*, and sprouted forth in many Luxuriant Thoughts: It was the task of my *Riper Judgment* to correct these, and reduce my self to the standard of *Reason and Faith*.

As soon as I had finish'd *all the course of my Studies*, at the end whereof Men are usually receiv'd amongst the Rank of the Learned, *I began to be in great fears about my Eternal State*; for tho I was Master of *all the Sciences*, and had looked into all Religions, yet I found my self intangled in so many *Doubts and Errors*, that methought I had no other Profit in *Seeking to instruct my self*, but that I had the more discover'd my own Ignorance: Being thus dissatisfi'd in my own Mind, I resolv'd at last to enter on a *New Practice of Piety*, and now looking on the Divers *Actions and Opinions of Men*, there is almost none which to me seems not Vain and Useless; yet I am extreamly satisfied with the Progress which (as it seems to me) I have made in the *Search of Truth*, and have now chosen that *Right Religion*, in which I'll venture my Heaven and Eternal Happiness.

I know how subject we are to mistake in those things which concern us, and how Jealous we ought to be of the *Judgement of our Friends*, when it is in our Favour. But I discover in these *SPECULATIONS*, the Experience of Forty Years, and Represent therein *my Life, as in a Picture*, to the end that every one may Judge thereof; and that learning from Common Fame, what Men say of my Naked Thoughts, I may find a *New Means* of Instructing my Self, and thereby Pass to Heaven with greater Assurance.

The *Atbenian Oracle* never pretended to be Infalible; neither is it my design to charge those with *Schism* who serve God in a Meeting, with as much (or perhaps more) Devotion, than I do in the *Established Church*, but only to shew how I govern my own Life, and what need there is (in this Wicked Age) of a *New Practice of Piety*.

## The New Practice of Piety.

5

I Reverenc'd our *Theology*, and pretended to Heaven as much as any ; but having learnt, as a most certain Truth, that the *Right Way* to it, is no less open to the most Ignorant, then to the most Learned ; and that those Revealed Truths, which led thither, were beyond our Understanding ; I durst not submit to the weakness of my *Ratiocination* ; and I thought that to undertake to examine them, and to succeed in it, requir'd some extraordinary Assistance from Heaven and somewhat more than Man.

I shall say nothing of *Philosophy*, but that seeing it hath been cultivated by the most Excellent Wits, which have liv'd these many Ages, and that yet there is nothing which is undisputed, and by consequence, which is not doubtful. I cou'd not presume so far, as to hope to succeed better than others. And considering how many Different Opinions there may be on the same thing, maintain'd by Learned Men, and yet that there never can be but one only Truth : I declar'd ( almost ) all false, which had no more then Probability in it.

As for other Sciences, since they borrow their Principles from *Philosophy*, I judg'd that nothing which was Solid, cou'd be built upon such Unsound Foundations ; and neither Honour nor Wealth were sufficient to invite me to the study of them ; For ( I thank God ) I found not my self in a condition which oblig'd me to make a Trade of Letters for the Relief of my Fortune. And although I made it not my Profession to despise Glory with the Cynick ; yet did I little value that which I cou'd not acquire but by False Pretences.

And lastly, for Unwarrantable Studies, I thought I already too well understood what they were, to be any more subject to be deceiv'd, either by the promises of an Alchymist, or by the Predictions of an Astrologer, or by the Impostures of a Magician, or by the artifice or brags of those Quacks who profess to know more than they do.

By reason whereof, as soon as my years freed me from the subjection of my Tutors, I wholly gave over the study of Letters, and resolving to seek no other knowledge, but what I could find in my self, or in the great Book of the World ; I employed the rest of my youth in Travel, to see Courts and Armies, to frequent People of several humours and conditions, to gain Experience, to hazard my self

self in those Encounters of Fortune which shou'd occur ; and every where to make such a *Reflection on those things which presented themselves to me, that I might draw Profit from them.* For (methought) I could meet with far more TRUTH in the Discourses which every Man makes touching those affairs which concern him, whose event would quickly condemn him, if he had judg'd amiss, then amongst those which Letter'd Men make in their Closets, touching Speculations, which produce no Effect, and are of no consequence to them, but that perhaps they may gain so much the more vanity, as they are farther different from the Common Understanding : Forasmuch as he must have imployed the more wit and subtilty in endeavouring to render them probable. And I had always an extream desire to learn to distinguish Truth from Falshood, that I might see clearly into the Errors of my Life, and enter on a *New Practice of Piety* ; and so it hapned that by little and little, I freed my self from many Mistakes which did eclipse my Natural Light, and render'd me less able to Comprehend Reason. But after I had employed some years in thus studying the Book of the World, and endeavouring to get Experience, I took one day a Resolution to search also within my self, and to employ all the forces of my Mind in the choice of *The Right Way to Heaven* ; having therefore got the *Weather-gage of Touthful Mistakes*, by diligent Scrutinies, and proper Remarks ; having put in the Balance, and weigh'd my Native Religion with all others that are extant, I now make that the object of my Choice, which before was only the effect of Prepossession ; and as I was list'd a Soldier of Christ in my Baptism, so now I declare my self *A Volunteer in his Service* ; what was then done without my Knowledge, I now ratifie by my free Free Consent. And I resolve not to change my Banner as long as I Live.

'Tis no Solecism in Divinity, to say that *the Prince of Peace, is the Lord of Hosts.* The Church Militant, is his Army compos'd of many Battalions in different Posts, and under various Orders. So long as they all serve the great Captain of our Salvation, and practise well the Discipline of their Arms, I refuse not to give the word of Peace to any, let him be of what Company or Troop soever.



## The New Practice of Piety. 9

I am not fond of the Names which distinguish one Party from another in the *Church*. I esteem not a Man the better for being regimented in this *Communion*, rather than in that. And for ought I know, in the *Camp of God*, a *Reformade* may be as acceptable, as in those of Men. However, a Mutineer in either is odious, and to raise *Factions* about *Religion*, is to adore *Mars*, instead of *Christ*; and to commence a War, for the sake of Peace. I cannot approve of their bitter *Zeal*, who, if they cannot call down Fire from *Heaven*, will kindle it on the *Earth*, against all that think not as they do. He is an ill Disputant for Christianity, who uses no other Topicks than Gun-powder and Steel. *The Logick of Mahomet becomes not a Disciple of Jesus*; and I should make but an Hypocritical Convert, were I to be *Dragoon'd* into *Religion* by the Domineering Arguments of *Boored Apostles*.

The use I make of this Variety in *Religions*, is far different: *Truth* is *Homogeneous*, and attracts to it self all that is of its own *Nature*, wheresoever dispers'd or separated, rejecting the rest, as not pertaining to it. Thus I, overlooking the *Errors* and *Mistakes* of those who differ from me, at the same time embrace their *Orthodox Tenets*, and shunning their *Vices*, I imitate their *Virtues*. This is to take things by the right handle, and like the *Bee*, to suck *Honey* out of every *Weed*. It is of the *Nature* of the *Sun*, who has commerce with many *Pollutions*, yet remains himself undefiled.

I abhor that mercenary Course of joyning my self with any *Party of Christians* that is uppermost, to abet the prevailing *Faction*, and assert the Opinions most in Fashion; this is to be a *Weather-cock* in *Religion*, pliable to every fresh Gale of *Interest*. Neither, on the other side, do I think it good manners, or Prudence, to affront the *Religion* of the *State*, and by a sawcy Impertinence condemn those who worship *God* in the manner prescrib'd by the *Laws* of the *Land*. In my *Travels* I learn'd this *Moderation*, and he that knows not how to practice it, is not fit to stir out of his Chimny Corner. *Religion* does not authorize *Rudeness*, neither is *Arrogance* compatible with *Devotion*. It is difficult to find a Company of four or five Men together, where

E

there.

there is not at least a *Triumvirate* of Religions, and he that will set up for a *Dictator* among them, shall have all the Forces united against himself.

I do not value any Man's Religion by his starch'd look or *supercilious Gravity*. I hate to put on an unfociable Face or screw my self into an ill-humour'd *Riddle*; I do not angle for the *Character* of a *Saint*, by magisterially declaiming against the *Innocent* Divertisements of Humane Life and ranking things Indifferent among the greatest Crimes. Above all, I cannot approve of those who are prone to fasten *Gods Judgments* on particular *Occasions*, as if they alone cou'd unlock the Secrets of the Almighty, and were the Privy-Counsellors of Heaven. No Man's *misfortune* shall escape their *Censure*, but forgetting what our Saviour said of those on whom the Tower of *Siloam* fell, they condemn all alike, and presume to distribute the *Divine Justice* by their own *Weights* and *Measures*. I am in Love with that saying of *Plato*, *There is no Envy in the Deity*. Assuredly that Immense Ocean of Goodness never ceases to show'r down his Favours and Blessings, on all that are capable of receiving them; and he is not partial to any of his *Creatures*. Like the *Sun*, he imparts his Influence to all the *World*, and if they rejoyce not in his *Beams*, the *Cloud* that hinders them is of their own raising. Those Men will hardly profelitate me, who dress the *Deity* in a frightful *Figure*, and then wou'd perswade the *World* to his *Essential Complexion*. While they exclaim against *Statues* and *Images*, they themselves commit *Idolatry*: They set up an infinite Tyrant, morose, arbitrary and cruel, instead of the Original, Increased Beauty and Goodness, worshipping the *Idol* of their own Imagination, instead of the Indulgent Father of all things.

I do not take Prayer to consist in saying o'er the devoutest *Collets* and *Oraisons* of the Church, without a due *Application* of *Spirit*. This is the Sacrifice of Fools, without *Salt* or *Fire*, and therefore must needs be unfavoury to *God*. The bended *Knees*, *submiss* Looks, and even a *Body* prostrate to the Ground, unless accompaigned with a proportionate *Fervour* and *Humility* of the *Soul*, are but Religious *Compliments*, and  
Pious

## The New Practice of Piety. II

*ious Banter.* Such Mock-Addresses, I doubt, are not graciously receiv'd in the Court of *Heaven*.

An equal dislike I have for those who offer up strange and unhallowed Flames; burning Incense, whose *Composition* is not warrantable; who hold not fast the *Form* of sound VVords, but giving the Reins to their *Tongue*, suffer to commit a thousand Indecencies in the Hearing of him who made the Ear. These, as well as the former, are guilty of *Crimen læsæ Majestatis*; while they affront *Heaven* with *Tautologies* and vain *Repetitions*. The one thro' inadvertency, the other thro' Presumption. This bringing *Form* without *Matter*, That offering *Matter* without *Form*; and both wanting the *Spirit* and *Life* of sincere *Devotion*. Yet I neither censure such as use an *allowable Form*, provided it be accompanied with attentive *Devotion*: And less those who address themselves to *Heaven* in *words of their own choosing*, provided it be season'd with *Discretion*, and a modest Society of *Spirit*. For when a Man fitly qualified, endued with *Learning* too, and above that, *adorn'd with a good life*, breaks out into warm and well deliver'd Prayer before his *Sermon*, it hath the appearance of a *Divine Rapture*, he raiseth and leadeth the *Hearts* of the Assembly in another manner than the most compos'd or best studied *form of words* can ever do: And those *Formal Suplicants*, who serve up all the *Sermon* with the same garnishing, would look like so many *Statues*, or *Men of Straw*, in the *pulpit*, compar'd with those who speak with such a *powerful Zeal*, that Men are tempted at the moment to believe *Heaven* it self hath directed their words to them.

On the other side, I think not that to be the only *Authentick Prayer*, which is attended with *Sensual Raptures*, and melting *Entertainments*: This is but the *Smoke of Passion*, and soon vanishes; a mere *Vapour* or *Ebullition*, a pleasing warmth of good *Natures*, and frequently the proper Result of a *Sanguine Complexion*.

*Prayer is the Exaltation of the Soul, the Flight of a Sublimated Spirit: It makes a Man an Angel pro Tempore, while the abstracted Mind takes the Wing, and soars aloft, hovering on the Borders of Paradise. He then breathes immortal Airs, burns like a Seraphim, and flames out with Holy and defæcate Fires, like the most exalt'd Orders of the Cœlestial Court.*



For my own part, I can Pray Kneeling, Standing, or Sitting; either at my Business or at my Repast; with or without Words and Ceremonies. And this I take to be the only Method of complying with St. Paul's Counsel, when he bids us Pray without ceasing, A swift and Pious *Ejaculation* many Times does the Office of a multitude of Words (tho' the most apposite and elegant in Humane Language) since God understands the *Dialect* of the Heart, as well as that of the Tongue, being the Architect of both.

The Posture which *Pythagoras* enjoyn'd his Disciples, when they appear'd before the Gods, was not without a Mystery. He bid them hold their Tongues revers'd; intimating thereby that they should observe a devout Silence in such Tremendous Company, and utter no Words which were not dipt in the Heart. And, I could wish the Advice of *Solomon*, instead of a *Noſce Teipſum*, were engraven on the Frontispiece of our Churches. "My Son, when thou enterest the House of God, let thy words be few, and be more ready to hear, than to offer the Sacrifice of Fools. In all this, I aim at a Devotion that is Masculine and Solid, Discreet and Humble, Sincere and Modest; full of Primitive Reverence, and the Fervor of the first Ages.

In proper speaking, our very silent Necessities are eloquent Prayers, and the wants which are hardest to be uttered, are such a prevailing Rhetorick with God, as oft times brings down swifter Relief from Heaven, than our loudest *Litanies*; even we our selves are most willing to dispose of our Alms to a Dumb-Person, who by being disabled to make his Address any other ways than by mute Signs, does by that Pathetick kind of Complaint engage our Charity. Indeed every Innocent Action of our Lives is a Prayer: But the more extraordinary Performances of Heroick Vertue, pierce the Clouds, storm the Regions above, and plunder Heaven it self (if I may so speak) of its choicest Blessings.

As to Publick Prayer, I own there is a Necessity of using some Forms and Ceremonies; and those are the best, which have the greatest Efficacy to excite and regulate our Devotion. Not too Pompous and Theatrical, nor slovenly and mean, but such as become the House of God, and give it



it an external Beauty, not a meer Pageantry of Holiness.

That Custom of the Greek, and other Eastern Churches to separate the Men from the Women in the Publick Assembly, seems to have something of Antiquity for its Plea, tho' the difuse of it in these Western Parts make us think it a Singularity. I envy not that Sex the Liberty of Vvorshipping God, and being present at the Publick Solemnities; yet I grudge them a Privilege which is so manifest an Impediment to our Devotion, as is their rehearsing aloud the Psalms, Responses and other Portions of the Common-Prayer. I could stand beside the fairest of that Sex in the Church, unmov'd as Marble, their brightest Charms serving but as Foils to set off the incomparable Eminency of that Majesty and Glory who is adored in that Place. But when I hear them break the bounds of Female Modesty, whose greatest Ornament is Silence; when I hear their Tongues running over the Prayers, as loud, if not louder, than the Men, either with a careless wantonness or affected Gravity, their Eyes divided betwixt an amorous Glance, and a devout Ogle. This, I must confess, gives me Offence; 'tis an Obstacle to my Devotion, and makes me think the Grecians are not without reason in assigning a particular Place of the Church to the Women, where they can neither be seen nor heard. And this will not seem uncourtly or austere, if we remember that St. Paul himself has said, *I permit not a Woman to speak in the Church.* And in another place, *Let Women have Power on their Heads* [that is, be covered or veiled] *because of the Angels;* or as some interpret it, *because of the young Men.*

I wish for a purer Reformation in the Church than we have hitherto seen; yet I am not for tearing up Christianity by the Roots. I could be glad to see the House of God purged and cleansed, the Building Repair'd and Beautified, without Removing it from the Foundations. The Office of a Bishop and a Presbyter, to me, seems no other ways differenc'd than thus; I look upon a Presbyter as a Parochial Bishop, and a Bishop as a Diocesan Presbyter. Their Dignity equal in Quality, tho' not in Quantity. The one has power of administering the Sacraments as well as the other: Only for the sake

take of Order and good Government in the Church, one is invested with a *Jurisdiction*, and *Superiority*, of which the other is as capable, if duely Elected to it.

I envy not the *Bishops*, or *Ruling Presbyters*, their Temporal Honours and Riches, neither would I be a Leveller in the Church of God: Yet it were a desirable thing, if there were a more equal Distribution of Ecclesiastical Benefices, that the poorest *Preaching Presbyter* might have an Income that should free him from the Temptation of envying a *Journey-man Carter*, and other inferior Trades who many times can boast of a larger Stipend than some of the *Ministry*.

*Pluralities* and *Non-Residents* were never heard of in the Primitive Ages, and it is a shame there should be so many fat Parsonages, and yet so many lean Parsons. It is the Devil's Market where Church-Livings are bought and sold, and such *Spiritual Hucksters* deserve to be whipt out of the Temple.

I refuse not to bow at the Name of *Jesus*, yet can give no Reason why I should not as well bow at the Name of *Joshua*, they being both one and the same in the Hebrew. And that Scripture, which is made to countenance this Ceremony, seems to me to speak no more than that in the Name of *Christ* all addresses should be made to God the Father. For if it were to be literally taken, why do they who so receive it, bow the Head, instead of the Knee? Besides, I see no Reason why I shou'd not bow at the Name of *Messias*, *Christ*, *Emanuel*, since the Redeemer of the World is called by all these Names? Nay, why should not I pay the same Reverence to all the Names of God in all Languages, especially to that tremendous Name *Jehovah*, which the Jews think it unlawful to utter? 'Tis true indeed, I can comply with the Custom of the Church in a thing not directly opposite to any positive Command; but I protest at the same time, my wishes are, that a Custom acknowledg'd to be indifferent, even by those who most zealously plead for its practice, were rather disus'd, than impos'd on Men of tender Consciences, since it gives so much Scandal, and has no Authority but that of Tradition to back it.

I am naturally a Lover of *Musick*, and believe it has an efficacy in composing or ruffling the Spirits, according

to the various kinds of it. But I find its most immediate Operation is on the *Fancy*, and sensual Affections, not on the *Superior Faculties* of the Soul. And therefore I see no use of it in the *Church*, where we come not to pay Homage to God in the strength of an exalted Imagination, or to present him with the *First-Fruits* of our *Passions*, tho' never so refin'd, but to offer up our selves a *Living Sacrifice*, which is our Rational Service, since God is to be worship'd in *Spirit* and *Truth*, and not with airy *Notions*, and carnal Raptures.

Tho' the *Ear* is a Member consecrated to the Service of Religion, since *Faith* comes by *Hearing*, yet I cannot observe that my *Faith* is at any time increas'd by the most Harmonious Lessons on the *Organ*, or other Instruments of *Musick*, used in Divine Service. Neither do I admire at the Countryman's Freak, who the first time he had ever been in a Cathedral, hearing the *Organ* strike up, fell a dancing, as tho' he had been in a *Musick-House*. To speak freely, I know not why we may not praise God as acceptably in a *Dance*, as with *Musick*, since the *Jews*, from whom we borrow our Arguments for the latter, did as usually practise the former; there being but little use of the one without the other. To me a Chapter in the Bible is the best *Musick* in the World, and no Melody like that of a good *Sermon*, where the Preacher, like a skilful Artist, reconciles the Discords of the *Law* and the *Gospel*; and between the Emblems and Types of the one, and the Substantial Truths and Mysteries of the other, strikes up such a grateful *Harmony*, as far exceeds the best *Confort* in the World, tho' it were as charming as *Nebuchadnezzar's*, and made up of the whole Family of *Musick*.

I am a great Admirer of good *Painting* and *Sculpture*, yet can never find them Helps, but Hinderances to my Devotion; since it is impossible for the greatest Master that ever profess'd those *Arts*, to draw or carve to the Life, what was never expos'd to any of his Senses, or to contrive a Figure of that which has no Resemblance, the *Invisible Divinity*. Indeed a Man's own *Fancy* in such Cases is the best Painter; and if it be lawful to make use of *Pictures* or *Images*, 'tis of such as our own Imagination frames: Yet this is the way to become *Anthropomorphites*, and worship God



God under the *Similitude* of a Man; or to follow the Pagan Vanities, and adore him under the likeness of a Beast, or some other sensible *Figure*; since all the *Ideas* of that *Mimick Faculty*, are but the Transcripts of External Objects: *Aristotle's* Maxim being truer of this, than of the *Intellect*, That there is nothing in it which was not first in the *Sense*. The only way to have a true *Idea* of God, is to suppress the Operations of this busie *Faculty*; and by withdrawing into the most inward *Recess* of the *Mind*, there, as in a *Mirror*, to contemplate that *Infinite Essence*, who is hid behind himself (if I may so speak) and cannot be discover'd but by his *Back-parts*.

It is with Pleasure that I behold Him in his *Rays* which shine in all his Works, and he has cast his shadow through out the *Universe*, but I should be oppress'd with Glory, were I capable of fixing my Eyes on that *Abyss* of Splendors, before which the most *Illustrious Spirits* in Heaven cover their Faces, as if they were asham'd of their comparative Imperfections, and were not able to behold that Original *Increased Purity* without a Blush.

I have no ambition to become an *Eagle* in *Divinity*, neither do I emulate the towering Flights of such as pretend to extraordinary *Revelations*. I had rather walk under the *Piazas* of Gods Church, than on the *Battlements* of the Devils Chappel, lest my Head should grow giddy with *Enthusiasms*, and I be blown off from those Heights and Pinnacles with some wind of vain Doctrine. That Father of the *Arrian* Heresie was an *Icarus* in Religion, he had lofty Thoughts and soaring Speculations, but he flew without a Guide, he forsook the Path of his Mother the Church, his Wings melted, and he had a terrible Fall, which at once bereft him of his Life, and ('tis to be fear'd) of his *Salvation*.

I take great Pleasure sometimes to find my self entangled in *Difficulties* and *Dangers*, out of which I have no *Skill* to extricate my self. I never think my self safer than in such a *Labyrinth* of thwarting Events, as no *Clue* of my own Reason or Experience can lead me out. 'Tis then I can be chearful and triumph, knowing my Deliverance is near at hand. And herein lies the *Quintessence* of my Comfort,  
that



## The New Practice of Piety. 17

that I am thus particularly, and demonstratively assur'd of the Divine *Favour* and *Protection*, since nothing below a *Miracle* of *Providence* could untie so knotty a juncture of *Misfortunes*.

Were all the Passages of my *Life* publish'd, it wou'd be taken for more than a *Romance*, it is so full of *Adventures*, which surpass the *Stories* of *Gyants*, *Monsters*, *Enchanted Castles*, and the whole *System* of *Knight Errantry*. Such strange and unexpected *Escapes* as I have made from the very *Jaws* of *Death*, exceed the *Fables* of *Poets*. And had I no other Reason but the Remembrance of my own *Perils* and *Deliverances*, it were more than enough to convince me of an unerring Eye that watches over *Mankind*. This makes me chearful and easie in all humane Circumstances, and reconciles me to the *Stoicks*. I look on all things to be govern'd by a fixed *Law* and *Destiny*; and therefore cou'd quietly sit down with *George Withers*, and say, *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*. I consider my self as a *Part* of the *Universe*, and therefore am never troubled at any thing which happens to me, since it comes not to pass without the Knowledge and Will of him who in all his Dispensations has Regard to the *Good* of the *Whole*; from which I am not excluded as a *Member*, and therefore must needs participate of the *Common Benefit*, even when I think I suffer *Damage*. I am not peevish at a *Calumny*, nor waspish at a loss. When any one does me an *Injury*, I take a singular Pleasure in forgiving him. There is nothing so much gratifies an ill Tongue, as when it finds an *ANGRY HEARER*; nor nothing so much disappoints and vexeth it, as *Calmness* and a *Quiet Spirit*. It is the most exquisite and innocent *Revenge* in the *World*, to return *Gentle Words*, or none at all, to ill Language. There is such a Noble *Pride* attends this generous *Conquest* of an *Enemy*, as far surpasses the celebrated Sweetness of *Revenge*. I hate to gratifie my *Passion* the common way; and because he has acted the part of an ill Man, I must do so too, or worse, by giving scope to my *Rage*, and executing the severest Dictates of my *Fury*. He is but a *Tinker* in *Morality*, who to repair one Breach, makes another; and perhaps wider than the first. Besides, 'tis the most profitable kind of *Revenge*, when I turn a *Wrong* to an *Advantage*, by cancelling it; since thereby I

make a *Friend* of an *Enemy*; and if he have but the least Spark of *Gratitude* and *Vertue*, my *Benignity* makes him not only blush at his *Offence*, but puts him upon some ingenuous Study how to make me amends.

This *NEW WAY* of revenging of Wrongs, has been my constant Practice for six Months; so that now, *to forgive Injuries, is so easie to me, 'tis scarce a Trouble*. And when any wound me with Slanders, I meet 'em with *PATIENCE*: *Hasty Words rankle the Wound, soft Language dresses it; Forgiveness cures it, and Oblivion takes away the Scar*. It is more noble by Silence to cover an Injury, than by Argument to overcome or spread it.

Thus (when any wrong me) *I AM BRAVELY REVENGED*; I slight it, and the Work's begun; I forgive it, and 'tis finish'd: *He is below himself, that is not above an Injury*: But if my Brother *PRIVATELY* offends me, I reprove him privately; and by this means, when he has lost himself in an Injury, I find him again in my Forgiveness. *He that rebukes a private Fault openly, sordidly betrays it, rather than reproveth it*.

But in all Cases of this Nature, *I change Conditions with my Brother, and then ask my Conscience what I would be done to*: Being resolv'd, I *EXCHANGE* again, and do the like to him; and *that, I'm sure, is Right Christianity*.

I esteem it one of the most substantial Exercises of Religion, to subdue our *Passions*: And because *Anger* is the most violent and precipitate, I use my most strenuous Endeavours to stifle this in its *Embryo*. Other *Passions* take a gradual Rise, and insinuate by steps; but *Wrath*, like *Gun-Powder*, takes *Fire* all at once, and blows a Man up before he can look about him. Therefore I have by long and assiduous Practice, labour'd to get the Victory of this turbulent Affection; and I count it the *Master-piece* of Humane Wit, to be above all *Provocation*. I cou'd long ago stop my Hand in the midst of its *Career*, when aim'd at a faulty Servant, or scurrilous Companion; but now I can bridle the *Nerves* which wou'd have stretch'd it forth, and curb the officious *Spirits* which were so ready to fall forth on such an Occasion. I scorn to suffer my *Tongue* to be my *Hand's Deputy*, and to lavish out in unseemly Expressions; as if the Height of Man's Wit and Valour, lay in a biting

*Repartee.*

## The New Practice of Piety. 19

*Repartes.* Nay, I will not permit so much as my *Cheek* to change Colour, my *Eye* to sparkle, or any other part of my Face to receive the least Impression of my *Resentments*, whereby it may be perceiv'd that I am fermented. If I am found dead on the spot, what matters it? *Not being able to govern Events, I endeavour to govern my Self.* 'Tis the greatest of *Dominions*, to rule ones *Self* and *Passions*. Yet at the same time I am not insensible of an *Affront*, nor void of due Reflection on it. All that I aim at, is to comply with the *Apostles* Advice, *To be angry and not to sin.*

I have no Pannick Fears of *Death* upon me, neither am I solicitous, how or when I shall make my *Exit* from the Stage of this *Life*; much less do I trouble my self about the manner of my *Burial*, or to which of the *Elements* I shall commit my *Carcase*. I envy not the *Funeral State* of Great Men, neither do I covet the *Embalming* of the *Egyptians*. I wonder at the Fancy of those who desire to be imprison'd in leaden *Coffins* till the *Resurrection*, and to protract the *Corruption* of their *Flesh*, out of which they shall be generated *de Novo*: As if they dreamt of rising whole, as they lay down, and carrying *Flesh* and *Blood* into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, without a *Change*.

For my Part, I admire the *Indian Obsequies*; and were it not against the long establish'd Custom of my *Country*, would sooner bequeath my *Body* to the *Fire*, than be inhum'd; that so I might be sooner resolv'd into the *Elements* of which I was first compounded.

Yet instead of that nearer way to Dissolution, I can be contented to undergo the tedious Conversation of *Worms* and *Serpents*, those greedy *Tenants* of the *Grave*, who will never be satisfied till they have eat up the *Ground-Landlord*.

I do not puzzle my self with projecting how my scattered *Ashes* shall be collected together, neither do I for that Reason take Care for an *Urn* to enclose them. I am satisfied, that at the last *Trumpet*, I shall rise with the same *Individual Body*, I now carry about me, tho' there may not then be one of the same *Individual Atomes* to make it up, which are its present Ingredients. For neither are they the same now as they were twenty years ago. Yet I may be properly said to have the same *Individual Body* at this Hour, which my Mother brought forth into the *World*, tho' it is



manifest, that there is so vast an *Accession* of other *Particles* since that time, as are enough to make *Ten* such *Bodies* as I had then. Which implies such a perpetual *Flux* of the former, as 'twould be a *Solæcism* in *Philosophy* to think I have one of my *Infant Atomes* now left about me.

If after all this, I may be still said to have the same *Individual Body* as I had then, tho' there be not one of the same *Individual Atomes* left in its *Composition*, why may we not assert the same of the *Bodies* we shall have after the *Resurrection*? *Matter* is one and the same in all *Bodies*; the *Individuation* of it, the *Meum* and *Tuum*, proceeds only from the infinitely different *Forms* which actuate it. Thus when my *Soul* at the *Resurrection*, either by its own *Energy*, or by the Power of *God*, and Assistance of *Angels*, shall be reinvested with a *Body*, it is proper to say it will be the same *Individual Body* I have now, tho' made up of *Atomes* which never before were *Ingredients* of my *Composition*; since not the *Matter*, but the *Form*, gives a Title to *Individuation*.

I am the more willing to believe this will be the manner of our *Resurrection*, because I think it not Decorous to put the *Angels* on the Drudgery of *Scavengers*; as if it should at that Day be their Employment to sweep the *Graves* and *Charnel-houses*, to sift the *Elements*, and rake in all the *Receptacles* of the *Dead*, for *Mens* divided *Dust*. Not that I think it impossible for *God* even this way to accomplish the *Resurrection* of the *Dead*, tho' the *Bodies* of all Mankind were crumbled into *Dust*, and that *Dust* scatter'd before the *Wind*, or distill'd into *Water*, or attenuated into *Air*, or tho' those *Bodies* were eaten by the *Beasts* of the *Earth*, or the *Fish* of the *Sea*, and those *Beasts* and *Fishes* eaten again by *Men*. Tho' they shou'd undergo all these *Changes* and *Transmigrations*, yet were they still in the great *Repository* of *God*. The whole *World* in this sense, being but as one great *Store-house*, and all the *Elements* as so many *Cells* therein; so that wheresoever we shall be laid up, whether in the *Bellies* of *Fishes*, *Entrails* of *Beasts*, or by various *Alterations* become the *Food* of *Men*, yet the great *Architect* of all things knows where to find our scatter'd *Remnants*. But why should we engage him in so infinite a Task, when the *Work* may as well be done a nearer way? And put him

to the Expence of multiplying *Miracles*, when fewer will serve the turn? When the Grand Alarm is given, He can soon fit our *Souls* with proper Matter for their future *Bodies*, out of the *Elements*, as well as out of their own *Antiquated Embers*. The *Jewish Rabbins* seem to deny the gathering together our dispers'd *Ashes*, and assign the Trouble to a certain *small Bone* in every Man's Back, which they say, never suffers any *Putrefaction*, but remaining to the last Day in its *Primitive Consistency*, impassible and incorruptible, is then impregnated by a *Dew* from *Heaven*, which diffusing its *Virtue* like a Ferment, not only animates and quickens this *Seminal Bone*, but also attracts all the *Atomes*, which formerly constituted the *Body*, tho dispers'd in the remotest *Corners*, and most hidden *Recesses* of the *Universe*, marshalling them in the same *Order* as they had before the *Dissolution*, and so in a moment recovering the *Body* to its *Primitive State*. But these are gross *Conceits* for *Christians*, who believe that our *Bodies* shall in that great and *Final Change* become *Spiritual* and *Immortal*, being for ever divested of all the *peculiar Circumstances* of *Flesh*, and *Blood*.

Let the manner be how it will please *God*, I am raviſh'd to think what a bright and serene *Morning* the *Resurrection* will prove, after the long *Night* of *Death*, and the languishing *Slumbers* of the *Grave*! How vigorous and active we shall rise from our *Beds* of *Darkness*, how merry and blithe from the melancholy *Regions* of *Horror* and *Silence*! More sprightly than *Youth*; stronger than *Lions*; and swifter than *Eagles*! Full of *Light*, full of *Joy*, we shall soar aloft, and like well mounted *Travellers* post it away through the *Balmy Air*, and liquid *Skies*, till we arrive at the Place of admirable *Mansions*, and be welcom'd to the *House* of *God*.

I dare not, with some of the *Jewish Rabbins*, say that all shall not rise at the great *Day*; much less will I presume, with others, to particularize so far, as to exclude all those who perish'd in *Noah's Flood*; or with a third sort, to confine the *Resurrection* to the *Children* of *Israel*; as if we, that are of the *Gentiles*, were not capable of it as well as they. But above all, I reject the *Censure* of the *Talmudists*, who say, that neither *Bilhah*, the Concubine of *Jacob*, that lay  
with

with *Reuben*; nor *Doeg* that caused *Saul* to kill *Abimelech* and the Priests; nor *Gehazi* the Servant of *Elijah* the Prophet, nor *Achitophel*, *David's* prime Minister of State, shall rise from the Dead. These are the Memoirs of *Hebrew Superstition*; Invidious Remarks, the peculiar *Herese* of that over-weening Nation.

Yet I am more scandaliz'd at some *Christians*, who will not allow *Salvation* to any Man that is not within the visible *Pale* of their *Church*; as if the *External Sun* of Justice were *Eclips'd* to all that are out of their narrow *Horizon*. Surely He enlightens every Man that comes into this *World*, and his *Rays* are not confin'd to *Countries* or *Parties*. He shines Universally, and no Man can trace him in the *Zodiack* of his Mercy.

I dare not, 'tis true, (with *Justin Martyr*) canonize the Philosophers, and place *Socrates* and *Heraclitus* in *Heaven*; neither am I sure that *Aristotle*, by his learned Treatises of *Heaven*, has obtain'd an Inheritance there himself. 'Tis too officious a Regard, and too bold a Charity, thus happily to dispose of *Particular Men*. On the other side, I dread to pass the Sentence of *Damnation* on all the *antient Pagans*, and to aver that none were saved that died before the fifteenth Year of *Tiberius*. Tho' the mere *Light* of *Natural Reason* was not sufficient to conduct them, nor all their *Morality*, enough to entitle them to *Supreme Felicity*; Yet I cannot be perswaded that the infinite *Goodness* would doom the vertuous *Gentiles* to the *Abyss* of *Misery*. Neither can any Man demonstrate, That *Christ* was not the *Light* of the *Gentiles* before his *Incarnation*, as well as after; and since *Abraham* saw his Day and was glad, how do we know that *Plato*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Pythagoras*, *Cyrus*, and other wise Law-givers, Philosophers and Kings, Men renown'd for their *Prudence*, *Temperance*, *Fortitude*, *Chastity*, *Liberality*, and the like Vertues, might not also be favour'd with a glimpse of the *Messias*, the Desire of all Nations, before he appear'd in the *Flesh*? Tho we have no Records in *Scripture* of *Hermes Trismigestus*, *Zoroaster*, *Phocilides*, *Homer*, *Theogenes*, *Epictetus*, *Theseus* and *Hercules*, yet we cannot be assured, but that they had *Faith*, and expected the *Redeemer* to come, as well as *Job*, who was not of the *Holy Line*, but a *Branch* of the *Gentiles*.

When



When I consider what Pains some of the wiser *Heathens* have taken to find out the Truth; when I contemplate a *Pythagoras* travelling through *Asia*, and particularly conversant in *Palestine*, an *Empedocles* journeying into *Africk*, to learn the Wisdom of the *Egyptians*; an *Alexander the Great* falling at the Feet of the *Hebrew High-Priest*, I cannot think the *Heathen World* to be so ignorant of the true Religion, as is commonly imagin'd. They had a *Balaam* to instruct them, the *Sybills* to guide them to the Knowledge of a future *Messias*; and, for ought I know, some of them might have the *Scriptures* of the Old Testament too, or at least a good part of them, even before that celebrated Translation of the *Septuagint*, was extant; since it was easie for those *Gentiles*, who had Commerce with the *Jews*, to procure Copies of their *Law*, when they were made Captives in *Media*, *Assyria*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*.

An *Esther* lying in the Bosom of *Ahasuerus*, a *Daniel* sitting at the right Hands of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Belshazzar*, and *Darius*, had fair Opportunities of instructing those *Heathen Monarchs*, in the *Mysteries* of the *Mosaick Law*: And surely such Holy Persons wou'd never neglect so noble a Work, as proselyting the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* to God.

In the Days of *Solomon*, the Fame of the *Jewish Nation* had reach'd the utmost Parts of the *Earth*, Kings came from far, and Queens from the remotest Borders of the Continent, to be the Disciples of that Royal Philosopher, and Spectators of the *Hebrew Grandeur*. How could then the *Divine Oracles* be hid from the *Gentiles*, or the *Sacred Tradition* of *Shiloh* to come, not be delivered to the inquisitive Nations of the *Earth*? Without doubt the *East* saw the dawning of the *Star of Jacob*, and the *South* could calculate his *Meridian*, even before he rose. Neither were the *North* and the *West* without some glimmerings of his Appearance.

The Wise Men that came to adore him at *Bethlehem*, perform'd but the Wishes of their Fathers, and the Eunuch of *Queen Candaces* made no Scruple to become a *Christian*, when *Philip* had convinc'd him that He of whom the Prophets had so long foretold, was now come in the *Flesh*. Surely he was the Desired of all Nations, the Hope of the *Gentiles*, as well as the Glory of his People *Israel*. There-  
fore

fore I cannot number it among the Commendations of *Christianity*, that a great part of those who profess that *Name*, are so presumptuously uncharitable, as to damn all that were not of the Seed of *Abraham* before *Christ* came in the *Flesh*; as if Salvation were entail'd to one *Family*, and no Man cou'd go to *Heaven* that was not circumcis'd.

Much rather had I believe, That in the very Instant of Death, *God* reveal'd the *Mystery* of *Redemption* to many innocent and vertuous Persons among the *Gentiles*, and infus'd a saving *Faith* in *Christ* into their Souls, at the very moment that their Senses were forsaking their Bodies. Supplying their want of *Scripture* or *Tradition*, with the Inspiration of his *Holy Spirit*, when they were taking the last gasp, and breathing out their own.

Or if this be not thought sufficient, I will believe, That when *Christ* descended into *Hell*, he preach'd the *Gospel* to the *Spirits* which were there in Prison; not only those who were disobedient in the Days of *Noah*, but all such of the Race of *Noah*, as by completing the Measure of their Sins, had sunk themselves into that *Place*, whether they were *Jews* or *Heathens*. And I cannot understand those *Texts* of *Scripture* which mention his spoiling of *Hell*, and leading *Captivity* *Captive*, if they may not be applied to his *Triumphant Deliverance* of some of those Souls which were shut up in the *Infernal Caverns*. Neither do I perceive any *Herésie* in believing, there might be some vertuous *Heathens* in the *Retinue* he carried with Him from thence to *Heaven*, as well as some of the Sons of *Israel*. However, leaving the manner of their Salvation to *God*, I will conclude, That it is unreasonable, uncharitable, and has too much of the *Jew* in it, to pass the Sentence of *Damnation* on all the *Gentiles*, since the *Holy Ghost* has assured us, That *God* is no Respector of Persons, but he that in every *Nation* fears Him, and works Righteousness, is accepted of Him.

Besides, methinks if matters were brought to the severest Balance, it would not appear Heterodox to say, That as all Men sinn'd in *Adam*, without their own personal Knowledge or Consent, so some might be saved in *Christ*, even without a particular and personal Belief in Him, of whom perhaps they never so much as heard.

Some

Some Grains of Allowance may be given to the involuntary *Frailties* of *Humane Nature*, some Indulgence granted to the invincible *Ignorance* of a great Part of *Adam's Posterity*, who if they knew not the *HIGH-WAY* to *Heaven*, which was reveal'd to their Brethren the *Jews* and *Christians*, might yet be conducted thither by some *BY-PATH*; since it is too narrow a Conceit of *God's Mercy*, to think, that because he had chiefly manifested it in the Royal Road of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, therefore he could never go out of the beaten Track. This were to retrench the *Divine Prerogative*, and to tye Him up to limited Conditions, whose Ways are in the Great Deep, and whose Foot-steps no created Being can trace.

The Satisfaction I have of the *Soul's Immortality*, if it amounts not to a Demonstration, may yet be numbred among those *Proleptick Ideas* that need none, as being self-evident. It is a Parallel with first Principles, and has equal Force on my Understanding; for I am not more convinc'd, That one and two make three, than that the *Soul of Man is immortal*. So that I make it not so much an Article of my Faith, as a Proposition of my Reason, and a Conclusion of Science. Yet I do not always go so far round about, as by a long Train of Logical Deductions and Inferences, to dispute my self into the Remembrance of my *Immortality*. This indeed were necessary to perswade another, but I have a nearer Method to comfort my self with the Demonstration of this *Noble Truth*, while it becomes an Object of my very Sense, and I can feel that *Immortality* in my self, which my Reason tells me another is possess'd of, as well as I. This is easier to be experienc'd, than utter'd in Words; 'tis an Art not to be acquired without assiduous Reflection, and strict Animadversion on our own Thoughts. But the Fatigue is more than recompens'd with the ineffable Pleasure that attends it; for when by a long and often repeated Practice, a Man has found the way to keep close Pace with his own Intellect, in all its Flights and abstracted Starts from the Body, when he can stand on the Brink of the *Immaterial World*, and perceive what is before Him, perceiving also that he perceives it, then 'tis he enjoys *Heaven* by Anticipation, and forestalls his future *Beatitude*, by tasting *Immortality* at present. He is risen from  
the



the Dead, before he dies; and lives an *Eternity* of Ages in a *Moment*. Neither is this a sleeping *Chimera*, or a waking *Dream*, but a real Truth; which, as I have said, is easier practised than expressed.

It was but a drowsie Conceit in those Fathers, who fancy'd the *Soul* shou'd sleep in the *Grave* till the *Resurrection* of the *Body*. Had they well traced the *Nature* of a *Spirit* from its Principles, they wou'd not have provided a *Dormitory* for that *Being* which wou'd cease to be, shou'd it cease to *act*; since its very *Essence* implies a Contradiction to *Rest*. I cou'd as easily, and with equal Reason, believe it will be *annihilated* at its separation from the *Body*, or at least that it shall be *metamorphos'd* into something else, since if it continue the same it was before the Dissolution of the *Body*, it must continue to think; it being indeed nothing else but a pure *Thought*; and how a *Thought* can take a Nap, is beyond the Verge of my *Philosophy* to apprehend; neither do I know of any thing in *Divinity* that seems to countenance so dull a *Theorem*. As for those Texts of *Scripture* which seem to adumbrate the Supreme Felicity of the *Saints* by the Notion of *Rest*, I do not think they mean a Cessation of the *Souls* natural Energy: for how could it then be capable of that *Seraphick Love* and *Joy*, in the *Beatifick Vision*, which is the chief Entertainment of the Blessed in *Heaven*? It seems rather to intimate the *Soul's* Escape and Deliverance from the Troubles and Inquietudes of this mortal Life; which may very well be call'd a *REST*, and yet be consistent with an *Activity* far surpassing that which it was endued with in the *Flesh*. The *Scripture* clothes many abstruse *Mysteries* in familiar Dresses, the better to accommodate them to the Conceptions of vulgar and ignorant People, who make up far the greatest Part of *Mankind*; and we must not expect the rigid Definitions of *Aristotle* from the Sacred Pen-Men. But when we come scientifically, and according to the Method of the Schools, to treat of the *Nature* of Things, we ought to fit them with proper and intelligible Terms, and pursue their *Essences* by a continu'd Progress, not by wild Fits and Starts.

I am not at all edified in the Notion of the Blessed Trinity, by the sight of a *Triangle*, neither can the whole System of the *Mathematicks* improve my Knowledge in this Point of  
Divinity.

Divinity. The three distinct Faculties of a Humane Soul are far from illustrating to me the Three Persons in One Essence, since there is a Subordination in the Former, whereas there is an Equality in the Latter. Such Similitudes and Comparisons, seem not to me a Stenography or short Characters, but a false Spelling in Divinity. And tho' to wiser Reasons, and more Active Beliefs, they may serve as Luminaries in the Abyss of knowledge, yet my Heavy Judgment will never be able to mount on such weak and brittle Scales and Roundels to the lofty Pinnacles of true Theology. All the force of Rhetorical Wit has not Edge enough to dissect so tough a Subject; wherein the little obscure Glimmerings we gain of that Inaccessible Light, comes not to us in direct Beams, but by the faint Reflection of a Negative Knowledge. And we can better apprehend what it is not, than what it is. In the Disquisition of his Works, I own, that those do highly magnify Him, whose Judicious Enquiry into his Acts, and deliberate Research into his Creatures, return the Homage of a Devout and Learned Paraphrase. But in the Contemplation of that Eternal Essence to which no created Thought can be adequate, I will humbly sit down and silently admire, that which neither the Heart can conceive, nor the Tongue or Pen of Men or Angels can declare as they ought, and as it is.

I do not affect Rhodomontadoes in Religion, nor to boast of the Strength of my Faith: I do not cover Temptations, nor court Dangers: Yet I can exercise my Belief in the difficultest Point, when call'd to it; and walk steadfast and upright in Faith, without the Crutch of a visible Miracle. I can firmly believe in Christ, without going in Pilgrimage to his Sepulchre, neither need I the Confirmation that was vouchsaf'd to St. Thomas, that Proverb of Unbelief. However I do not bless my self, nor esteem my Faith the better, because I lived not in the Days of Miracles, nor ever saw Christ or any of his Disciples. Or because I was not one of his Patients on whom he wrought his Wonders. Both their Faith and mine were infus'd by the Ministration of the Senses. And as they believ'd because they saw, so I believe, because I hear (undeniable Witnesses give Testimony of) the same Matter of Fact. Nor do I esteem their Faith the more Extraordinary who lived before his Coming, since

they raised not a *Belief* of the future *Messias*, but on clear *Prophecies*, and most significant *Types*; being assured by the constant stream of *Tradition* from Father to Son, that what *GOD* had predetermin'd and foretold to *Adam* in *Paradise*, to *Abraham*, to *Jacob*, and the *Prophets*, shall infallibly be accomplish'd in the fulness of *Time*. And I cannot see wherein their *Faith* had the Advantage of ours, that it should deserve to be esteem'd more Bold and Noble, since they had an *Isaiah* to preach the *Gospel* to Them, who for the Eloquence of his Style, his most accurate and particular Enarration of the *Birth* of *Christ*, has acquired the Title of the *Fifth Evangelist*. 'Tis certain both their *Faith* and ours rests on the *Divine Revelation*, whether it consist in *Prophesie* of Things to come, or *History* of Things past. The ultimate *Object* of our *Belief* is one and the same, that is, the *Authority* of *GOD*. They had their *Sacraments* also to strengthen their *Faith*, as well as we. They were *Baptized* in the *Cloud* and in the *Sea*, they had *Manna* from *Heaven*, and *Water* out of a *Rock* in the *Earth*. They all eat the same *Spiritual Meat*, and drank the same *Spiritual Drink* as we; for they drank of the *Spiritual Rock* of *Ages*, that followed Them, and that *Rock* was *Christ*.

I do not conclude from hence, That there is no difference between the *Sacraments* of the *Law*, and those of the *Gospel*. Doubtless there is an Excellency in the Latter, to which the Former could not pretend. The *Elements* in Both are *Natural*, as *Water*, *Manna*, *Bread*, *Wine*, &c. so that in the *Exteriour*, neither of Them has the Advantage of the other. They were both also *Conduits* of the same inward *Grace* and *Spirit*. Only herein lyes the difference, that the *Jews* had it but by *Measure*, whereas the *Christians* receive it in *Abundance*. They touch'd but the Hem of *Christ's* Garment, but we feed on his *Body* and *Blood*. They did but wade in the low Ebb of *Grace*, whereas we swim in the High-tide, and over-flowings of the *Holy Spirit*. Before the Everlasting *Sluces* were drawn up; while the *Heavens* were kept shut, the *Waters* which were above the *Heavens* did but distill gently on Mankind: The *Divine Influence* came Drop by Drop, here a little and there a little. But when *Christ* had



had once ascended up on High, and open'd the *Eternal Gates* above, then he show'd down his Gifts upon Men, and let loose the Flood of Light and Grace, that so it might water the whole Earth, and make glad the City of GOD, which is the Christian Church

The *Sacraments* of Christianity are the Principal Channels through which *Eternal Life* is conveyed to our Souls. By *Baptism* we are transplanted from the Old Stock of the *First Adam*, and inoculated into Him, who is the *True Vine*, in whom we grow up as Branches, receiving Nourishment and Encrease by the *Eucharist*, which conveys to us the vital Principles of *Immortality* and Salvation. I cannot speak of this tremendous Mystery, without a *Circumlocution*, nor think of it without a *Rapture*! It is such a Complex of *Riddles*, as it hath pos'd the stoutest *Sampsons* of the Church to solve: He alone was able to think and speak aright of it in few words, who when he first instituted it, said, *This is my Body, This is my Blood*. That there is a real Change made in the outward Elements after the words of Consecration are pronounc'd, is an *Article* of my Faith; but the Manner how *this Change* is effected, is no Query of my *Philosophy*. I had rather humbly believe, what I cannot comprehend, in this Venerable *Sacrament*; than suffer any vain Disquisitions to stagger my Faith. I see *Bread and Wine* both retaining the same Taste, Colour and other Natural Qualities of Creatures. Therefore I conclude there is no *Alteration* made in that which is the Object of my Senses. The Change must be in the *Spiritual Part*, which only falls under the *Intellect*. And yet I believe this Change to be *Real*, tho' I cannot sensibly perceive wherein, or how 'tis produced. Far be it from me, to enter into the Secret of those who make a mere *empty Figure* of the Blessed *Sacrament*; as if we were made partakers only of mere *Natural Bread and Wine* in the Holy Communion. This is to follow the impious Steps of *Manicheus and Marcion*, who taught that our Saviour had only a *Fantastick Figure* of a Body, not a *Real one*; as if they thought the Blessed *Virgin Mary* brought forth nothing but a *Shadow*, because she was overshadowed by the Holy Ghost. *This is to out-strip Judas, and begin where his Treason*

*Treason left off*: And as he sold his Master's Life, so we should rob the Church of his *Body and Blood*, which he bequeath'd to her in his last Supper. Doubtless his Body is in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, but not *Bodily*, or after a corporeal manner, not invested with all the gross Circumstances of *Flesh and Blood*, but after a Spiritual Manner, in a Mystery too profound for *Humane Sense or Reason* to comprehend. I am extremely pleas'd with the Answer which Queen *Elizabeth* gave to the Bishop of *Winchester*, when he demanded her Opinion of the *Real Presence*; said she,

*'Twas GOD the Word that spake it,  
He took the Bread and brake it;  
And what the Word did make it,  
That I believe and take it.*

It was an ill-manner'd, as well as an envious Retort of him, that stood by and said, Your Highnesses Reply is like the *Delphick Oracle*, full of Ambiguous Subtlety: He had discover'd more Breeding and Charity, had he told her, That her Answer savour'd of his Wisdom, who when tempted by the *Pharisees* with a Question concerning the Lawfulness of paying *Tribute to Cæsar*, took a piece of Money, and ask'd *whose Image and Superscription* was that stamped on it? They said, *Cæsar's*: He replyed, *Give therefore to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's; and to GOD, the Things that are GOD's*. It is certainly a necessary piece of Prudence sometimes to obviate the *Trains* of an Enemy, with a witty Evasion; which may be done without denying the Truth, or violating ones Conscience. Those who wou'd *trapan a Man with Queries*, and make him a Transgressor for a Word, deserve to be paid in the same Coin, and by an *Ingenious* adapting of words and placing of Periods, be baffled in their Design, and sent away like Fools as they came, without any better satisfaction than they cou'd reap from a *Riddle*. In my Opinion, it is but a Pious Scepticism to suspend our Thoughts from determining the particular Mode of Christ's being present in the Sacrament, since it is impossible ever to demonstrate so recondite a Secret,  
into

into which even the Angels themselves, those *perfect Intelligences*, perhaps look with Admiration, without improving their Knowledge. It is sufficient to my *humble Faith*, that my Redeemer is there, and that when I *worthily* receive this Blessed Sacrament, I shall receive the Author of it into my Tabernacle, and be united to the Heavenly Spouse. This is the true *Hidden Manna* which nourishes both Angels and Men; This is the Bread of Life, which strengtheneth Men's Hearts; This is the Wine which rejoiceth GOD and Man. This is that *Heavenly Morsel* which GOD has given us, as an Antidote against the Dregs of that Venom we all derive from *Adam's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

And he is a *KIND PHYSITIAN*, who, when nothing else in the Divine *Pharmacopæa* could be found available for so great a Cure, *applies his own Body*, to heal the Distempers of our Souls, and his Blood to restore the *Spoils of Humane Nature*; it is grown even to a Proverb, saith *Acosta*, among the poor *Indians* that have entertain'd the Faith, *He must never more be unholy, that hath once receiv'd the holy communion*. None but the Favourites of the King of Heaven, are admitted to this *Immortal Banquet*. None but such as have the *Wedding Garment* on, can have Access to this Table of Delicacies, this Repast of *Royal Dainties*. Many indeed (and too many, 'tis to be feared) are licens'd to come into the *Kings Anti-chambers*, and to sit down in the Church, and taste the *outward Elements*, but it is the Privilege of his Saints only to enter his Cabinet, and be *Regal'd* with the costly Entertainment of his Secret Table, and to partake in the New Wine of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A Serious Christian once told me, That if ever he was like *St. Paul*, taken up into the *Third Heaven*, it was when he first sat down at the Lords Table.

The Sacrament of the *Lords Supper* is the nearest and *visiblist* Communion that can be had with GOD and Christ upon Earth. Here are the greatest Revivings, and the sweetest Refreshings that a Pious Soul is capable of on this side Heaven it self. Other Duties seem to be our Work, this our *Meat and Wages*; other Duties are but pre-



preparative to this: *Baptism, Praying, Preaching, Hearing, Meditating, Conferring*, are all ordained but to fit us for this High and Mysterious Ordinance. Here you have all the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, folded up in one Rite. Here is the *whole contrivance of Salvation represented in a little Bread and Wine*, whereby GOD invisibly seals up an assurance of his Everlasting Love upon our Hearts.

As to the *Posture of Receiving*, I am not scrupulous, being willing to conform to the Custom of those with whom I *communicate*: I can receive on my Knees without Danger of Idolatry; or *SITTING*, without the Guilt of Contempt. This latter I esteem of greater Antiquity, it being the Posture wherein Christ *communicated to his Disciples* at the last Supper; unless it be said they *lay along*, according to the Mode of the Eastern People in those Days. However, I do not think the *Position* of the Body, but the Preparation of the Soul, is required to render one a *Worthy Communicant* in these Holy Mysteries.

I censure not the Primitive Christians, nor those more *MODERN* ones, who Communicate frequently. We should remember him often, *that never forgets us*. St. Augustin counselleth the more perfect to receive every Day, (and 'tis the Opinion of *NEW-ATHENS* that they are fit to receive the Sacrament, *That don't live in a known Sin*) yet I shall be timorous to approach these *Holy Mysteries*, without a Due Preparation, lest I should incur the Judgment which St. Paul has pronounced on those who *eat and drink unworthily*. I have Charity for others who Celebrate this Sacrament Monthly, Weekly, or Daily; but I should have little for my self, should I receive, this tremendous Mystery of Life, with less Preparation than were *requisite to fit me for Death*. It being in the Number of those Medicines which either *Kill or Cure*, according to the Constitution to which they are applied.

If we examine the Books of Physicians, those *Registers of Humane Frailty and Mortality*, we shall find no less than *Six Thousand Diseases* on the Score, to which Man's Body is liable. And 'tis to be feared the *Distempers of the*

the Soul come not short of the Account. What is Pride but a *Tympany*? Lust but a *Feavour*? Drunkenness but a *Dropfie*? Envy and Malice but the *Consumption* of the Soul? To obviate these and innumerable more Spiritual Maladies, GOD has (as a Token of his Infinite Bounty) given his Ministers Commission to dispense to the Sons of Men the *Sacrament of his Body and Blood*, as a Divine Catholicon, or Cure for [all] the Diseases which are incident to our Souls, but with this Condition, That he who partakes of these *Holy Mysteries* unworthily, instead of being healed, does but increase his Malady, work it up to a dangerous *Crisis*, if not to a desperate *Paroxysm*, which affords no Hopes, but a fearful Expectation of *Judgment to come*. Cyprian tells us two remarkable Stories, that one coming to the Sacrament, after the Minister had given him the Bread, and he going to eat it, it stuck in his Throat; *Gladium sibi sumens non cibum*, saith he, he received his Banè instead of Bread, the other came and took the Bread into his Hand; and when he went to eat it, there was nothing but *Ashes in his Hand*. This Apprehension, (I own to my Grief) has had such Influence on me, as to restrain me long from approaching the *Holy Table*. I tremble at the Thought of *Eating and Drinking my own Damnation*, and of trampling under-foot the Blood of the *Eternal Testament*.

I love not to humour my SPLEEN, or gratifie my *Hypocondria*, by inveighing against the Luxury of the present Age, as if it were worse than those of old, and that our Fore-fathers did not Eat and Drink to Excess, as well as we: The present Intemperance of Mankind is but the *Transmigration of the Former*: And our Posterity shall but act o'er the Patterns we set them. Drunkenness is as old as Noah's Flood, and Epicurism began with Adam. The one had no sooner escaped the Universal Inundation of Water, but he had like to have been drown'd in a Deluge of Wine; And the Other not content with the large Indulgence and Commission GOD had given him to eat of the *Fruits of Paradise*, must needs leap the Fence which guarded the *Forbidden Tree*, and when he might have Banquetted without Satiety or End on the *Varieties* which would have given him *Life and Immortality*,

lity, he plays the Glutton, and Surfeits himself with the Plant of Death and Damnation. His Children soon learn'd to tread in their Father's Steps, and *Gluttony was equally propagated with Mankind*. And tho' that REPAIRER of Adam's almost Shipwrack'd Progeny could be abstemious, when he might have furnish'd his Table with all the *Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air at one Meal*, yet he could not refrain from the tempting *Fruit of the Vine*. His Ebriety was also catching, and the Incestuous Off-spring of Lot ow'd their Original to the *Blood of the Grape*. Before the Flood, Men were busied in Banquetting and Riot; so they have been ever since, and so they will be, to the End of the World. Men are great Followers of Antiquity in the Practice of these Vices.

For my Part, I envy not the Board of *Vitellius*, that at one Meal, was covered with *two Thousand Fish*, and double that Number of *Fowls*. Neither do I covet the more Expensive Feasts of *Heliogabulus*. The refin'd Luxury of *Cleopatra* seems to me less Sordid, tho' the more Prodigious, who at one Draught swallow'd down a *Kings Ransom*. It was not her Palate she gratify'd in that Rich Portion, but she humour'd the Gust of her Ambition; which is a *Sublimier sort of Vice*, and may not unfitly be call'd the *Gluttony of the Soul*, while it Revels on the Breath of Fame, and Epicurizes with a *Chamelion-like Appetite* on the Air of Honour.

Intemperance is the *blind side of Mortals*; it is our soft Place, where we suffer our selves to be stroak'd and tickl'd to Death by the flattering Serpent. This made *Isaac* mis-place his Blessing for a *Piece of Venison*, and his Son to sell his Birth-right for a *Mess of Pottage*.

The *Italian Proverb* hits the Glutton Home, when it says, He digs his Grave with his Teeth, and cuts his Throat with the Knife that carves his Meat.

Rioting and Drunkenness were formerly esteem'd the National Sin of *Germany* only, but I believe other Nations may put in for a share in the Charter, *It is the Epidemick Vice of the whole World*. Men fall passionately in Love with it, as if they were of *Mucæus* the Poet's Opinion, who held, That perpetual Drunkenness was the only Reward



Reward of Merit and Vertue. The very *Mahometans* themselves, who are expressly forbidden by their Law to taste of Wine, being told by *Mahomet*, that there is lodg'd a Devil in every Grape, are sworn Votaries to *Bacchus*, and the greatest Drunkards on Earth.

For my own Part, I could be content with the Diet of *Johannes de Temporibus*, who when he had lived three Hundred Years, being asked by the King of France, what method he took to preserve his Life to so great an Age; Replied *Intus Melle, extra Oleo*. I say, I could be content with his Diet, not so much for the sake of *Spinning out my Life* to Centuries of years, (which yet I believe were not altogether impracticable in one of my Constitution) as that by a constant and habitual De-suetude of merely Animal Enjoyments, I might the more closely and vigorously attend the Operations of my Soul, and be always awake to the Superior Faculties of my Mind and Intellect, *Anima Sicca, est Anima Sapiens*, was a true Maxim of the Philosopher. And the Sons of *Minerva* experience it.

I abhor the Superstitious Cant, and Discriminating Shibboleth of *Enthusiasts*, who must needs take upon them to alter the Form of sound Words; as if the Dialect of the Primitive Church were grown obsolete, or that the Apostles understood not the Orthography of *Christian Faith*. I like not those Spiritual Boute-seus, who take a great Deal of Pains to breed a Quarrel between Religion and Nature, and set those two twins together by the Ears; as if we could not be good Christians, unless we deny our Sense and Reason. Certainly it is not the Business of Religion to Supplant and Extir-pate Nature, but to prune and rectifie it. Religion is that which polishes and smooths the Roughness of laps'd Humanity, pares away the Vicious Knobs which grow up with us from our tainted Embryo, and by various Instruments of Grace forms and squares us into fit Materials for GOD's Holy Temple. The VWork of Regene-ration seems in some manner to copy that of Creation. The Holy Ghost at his first Visit, finds us in our corrupt state, but meer Chaos, a confused Heap of Passions and Sensual Appetites; our Reason, that Light of our Souls,

lies Dormant, smother'd as it were by our Animal Faculties ; Darkness covers the Face of this *Microcosm*, till he give the Word, *Fiat Lux*, and by a forcible Energy strike some Divine Sparks out of our *Flinty Hearts*. Thus separating the *Cœlestial* Parts from the *Terrestrial*, and Sublimating us into the Similitude of his own glorious Essence, enduing us with *Faith*, without destroying our *Reason*, and inspiring us with Charity, without exterminating our Passions. Thus *I* can believe the most transcendent *Mysteries* of our Religion, and yet not be guilty of an implicate Credulity and blind Devotion: And *I* can practise *Christian Moderation*, tho' *I* cou'd never learn the Stoical Apathy.

*I* highly value the Sacred Scriptures as the Oracle of Divinity, and Rule of Faith: Yet *I* esteem them not a System of Philosophy, or a Pandect of natural Science. They are able to make us Wise unto Salvation, and perfect in the Knowledge of GOD, through Faith in Christ Jesus, but they instruct us not in *Humane Curiosities*, nor acquaint us with the Theory of all his Works. That frightful Caution of the Apostle [*beware of vain Philosophy*] is no Bug-bear to my Studies, nor can it startle my harmless Enquiries into the *Secrets* of the Elements. *I* will not be afraid of prying into the Circumstances of the *Earth*, since *Job* has told us, it is hang'd upon Nothing; nor of casting my Eyes up to the Heavens, and examining the Motions, Influences and Operations, of the *Sun, Moon and Stars*, since the same Holy Patriarch was posed with this Astrological Question by God himself, Canst Thou restrain the sweet Influence of the *Pleiades*, or loose the Bands of *Orion*? There are many Natural Observations in the Bible which may serve as Hints or Spurs to more accurate Disquisitions: But in no Place that *I* know of, does it set a *Non Ultra* to those Sober Enquirers, who by making a Modest and Judicious Search into the *Works of the Creation*, are capable of returning a more exact and consummate Praise to the Eternal Architect. Indeed, most (if not all) the *Manual Trades* in the World, are but the several *Species* of Practical Philosophy: While the Mechanick puts in Execution the Theory of the Student, and what the One dictates from the

the School of Nature, the other Experiments in the Shop of Art. Neither would Men know how to keep themselves in Action, or maintain Commerce, were it not for the Sake of Philosophy. To this are owing all the Advances and Progressions that Ingenious Men have made in their Callings and Occupations. And every Smith, Carpenter, Mason, &c. that makes an Improvement in his Craft or Mystery deserves the Title of *Virtuoso*, and to be number'd among the Philosophers.

Among all the Sciences, there is none to which (had I leisure) I could be more devoted than to *Astronomy*; and for this Reason, I could raise a Pyramid to the Inventors of the *Telescope*, That Happy Midwife to new Discoveries in the Heavens; and think my self no less oblig'd to him that first found out the MOTION of the EARTH. Both have Enfranchis'd me from the Slavery of Prepossession, and taught me to *unthink* the Sentiments of my greener Years. Methinks I owe no Allegiance to *Ptolomy*; and am perfectly wean'd from the Magisterial Dictates of the *Stagyrite*. I cannot so readily believe that the SUN moves above two Hundred and Fifty Thousand Miles every Minute of Time, as that the Earth moves Eighteen Miles in that space. And that the Planet *Saturn* moves ten, and the fixed Stars a Hundred Times faster and farther than the Sun in the same space, which must be the Consequence of the Earth's standing still, and the Sun's Motion. It seems no good Divinity to me, to expect that from GOD's Infinite Power, which is repugnant to his equal Wisdom and the Laws of Motion which he has Establish'd in the Universe. This were to make one of his Attributes Clash with another, and to calumniate his Holiness, which consists in the Harmony of them all. I adore his Omnipotency, and tremble at the Thought of calling in Question the Power that made All things of Nothing. Yet I think it my Duty to be Wise as well as Devout, and to speak rightly as well as reverently of his Divine Perfections. As his Word is the Rule of my Faith, so his Providence is the Pole-Star of my Reason. And in the Scrutiny of his Works I do not so much enquire what he uses to do. Being assured that as nothing is to him Impossible, so he has stated the Being, Actions, Passions,



## 38 The New Practice of Diet:

Passions, Qualities and Circumstances of all things, ordering them in exact Number, Weight and Measure. So that, *a posse Dei ad esse Rei non valet Consequentia*. He has fix'd the Laws of *Loco-motion* in Corporeal Substances, and ty'd up the *Primum Mobile* it self to a certain Proportion of Time and Distance, which it can no more exceed, than the smallest *Wheel* of a Watch.

Such prodigious WHIRLIGIGS, as the Heavenly Bodies must needs be, in the *Ptolomaick Hypothesis*, makes me giddy to think on't; and I believe they were troubl'd with a Vertigo, that first reel'd upon the Notion: Or they labour'd under the deception of those at Sea, who sailing within sight of the shore, and not being able to perceive the Motion of the Vessel that carries them, are apt to Fancy the Neighbouring *Cliffs, Towns and Trees* were under Sail, and steering a contrary Course, since they so appear to do. For not less silently do I believe the *Earth moves constantly round on her Axis*, thus making the Natural day and night, without putting the whole Frame of the Universe into an unconceivable Hurry.

The Planet *Jupiter* is discover'd by the Telescope to make the same Circulation in 10 Hours, *Mars* in 23, and the *Sun* himself in 28 days. These are no *Chimæra's* or dreams of Poets, no Metaphysical speculations of *Nut-shell Brains*, but Real truths, demonstrable by Art and Ocular Experience. And methinks it is a more *Uniform Idea*, if we suppose the *Earth to be a Planet* like the Rest, and to take its turn in the septenary dance round the *Sun*, who is plac'd in the Centre of this Vortex; and is the true *Apollo*, to whose Musick the whole Planetary System keeps time. I fear not the Lash of *Maurolycus*, nor the Scourge of his bigotted Brethren. If *Copernicus* was by them thought *Scutica & Flagello dignus*, for innovating on the Doctrines of *Ptolomy*; What was *Ptolomy* himself worthy of, who entrench'd on a greater Antiquity, and undermin'd the Philosophy of *Aristarchus Samius*, who taught the Motion of the *Earth* above Four Hundred Years before *Ptolomy* was an Infant? For my Part, I think it no Treason against the Common-wealth of Learning, to say, I prefer *Galileo's Tube* to *Ptolomy's Spectacles*; and the Discoveries of our English Royal Society,

ciety, to the blind Conjectures of the Peripateticks, and the wild Speculations of Old Athens.

When I was first inform'd that there were discover'd four new Stars moving about Jupiter, and three about Saturn, I was as well pleased, as they who received the earliest News of *Columbus's landing in America*. I am so far from being of *Alexander's Humour*, that instead of weeping. I should heartily rejoyce could I be credibly satisfied, That there are *ten Thousand more Worlds*, than are already discover'd.

I am naturally Melancholy, and the weight of this leaden Complexion does so depress my Spirits, That all the Race of Mankind on Earth seems too small to afford Variety enough for a Relief. This makes me the more willing to believe what my Reason suggests to be true, That the PLANETS ARE INHABITED. It is a lively, as well as a Rational Notion; and since they are Dark, Opaque Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, having no other Light but what they borrow from the Sun, and seem in all other Circumstances to be adapted for Habitations, I see no Solzicism in Philosophy, nor Heresie against the Faith, to believe they are really Inhabited as is this Globe. That they have Succession of Day and Night, and their Satellites or Moons to give them Light by Night, even as we, is demonstrable to the Eye by the help of the Telescope. But there would, in my Opinion, be little need of all this, were there no rational Inhabitants in those Cœlestial Globes. It is a fastidious Pride in Man to Faney all this Glittering Furniture above was only made for Ornament, or for Shepherds to gaze on in the Night, or for some other Inferior uses of the Sons of Adam. And 'tis a narrow Conceit to imagine, that tho' this Globe be plentifully Inhabited by all sorts of Animals, not a Turf of Land, nor a Puddle of Water being without its Tenants, yet all those ample and glorious Bodies above, should lye empty and vacant, tho' some of them be far bigger than our Earth, and for ought we know, may be ten times more commodious for Habitation. Those Passages in St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians 2. 11. Ephes. 1. 9, 10. Colos. 1. 16. seem to be calculated for the Inhabitants of those Heavenly Bodies. And his Emphatical words  
in

in *Ephes. 3. 9.* seem to be but a Transcript of the Revelations he receiv'd, and of the Things he saw when he was *Rapt into the Third Heaven, viz.* That there are some in those Heavenly Places, even Principalities and Powers, to whom the manifold Wisdom of GOD in Christ was made known, and that they were not only Created by Him, but for Him, and that they and we are *all of a Family or Descent.* These may be some of the *ἀρχαὶ ῥήματα* which that Holy Apostle speaks of in *2 Cor. 12. 4.* Words and Mysteries which could not be utter'd. And for ought I know, those Beings which he calls Principalities, Powers, Might, Thrones and Dominions, may be no other than the several glorious Colonies of the Coelestial Family dwelling in the Stars, who all believe in the same Eternal Jesus, even as we do, and through his Meditation make their Approaches to GOD the Father. This may be the farther Fellowship of the *Mystery of God, hid from the Beginning.* This the untraceable Riches of Christ, which put *St. Paul* to an *ὁ βάθος τοῦ σοφίας αὐτοῦ μυστηρίου τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.* O the Depth of his Wisdom! O the Superlative Greatness of his Power! But whether the *Planets be Inhabited* or no, this I am assured of, and can produce an Hundred Authentick Witnesses, that they are Dark Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, and that they have no Light but what they receive from the Sun, which also they do but partially enjoy like us, by Successive Hemispheres, having their Day and Night measur'd out to them proportionate to the Time they take up in moving round their Centers.

When I have tyred my self with following these *visible Motions of Nature*, I retire *Home* again, thinking to take Sanctuary in my self, and find a Rest in the Contemplation of my own SOUL: But there I do but commence a new Fatigue, and am hurried about in a *perpetual Circle* by an invisible Energy within me. I think, speak, and act with infinite Variety, yet know not how I perform these different Operations. I know my self to be an *Incorporeal Substance*, and can easily FEEL out my own Independency on the Body. I look on this *House of Clay* I carry about with me, to be only my Prison. But how I am confin'd to this Prison, I that am but a  
poor



## The New Practice of Piety. 41

poor Scintillation or Spark of the Eternal Sun, is a *Riddle* which I cannot solve. I can better imagine how a Beam of our Visible Sun may be united to a Marble Statue, than that a pure Thought should be fastned to a Clod of Earth, from which it cannot free it self but by Death, though it can pervade all the Universe beside. What Cement is it that thus closely tyes together two such incompatible Essences, as *Heaven and Earth*, *Light and Darkness*, *Spirit and Body*? This is a Knot must be left for *Elia* to untye, and is indeed one chief Argument of the *Ship-wrack* of Humane Reason, since not only all other Things are obscure to us, but we are so to our selves, the nearest Objects; even our own *Domestick* Operations are as incomprehensible to us, as those that are farthest off. The Things that touch us, nay, the very Faculties by which we *touch, see, understand, &c.* are as distant from us as the *Ninth Sphere*, and we are as much strangers to our selves, as to the Inhabitants of *Terra Incognita*.

There wou'd be nothing more welcome to me, than a HISTORY OF MY ORIGINAL, for I do not compute my Age or Family, by the short Chronology of the *Parish-Register*; nor do I think my self much the older by my Mother's Additional Record of *Nine Months*, I liv'd in her Womb. I esteem her Reckoning from my *Conception*, but the Tragick Memoris of my Death; and those which by most are accounted the *Chambers of Life*, and Shops of Generation, are no better in my Judgment than the Receptacles of the Dead, Seminaries of Corruption, the Graves of Souls *defunct to the Higher World*. For I believe I was then Born when the Morning Stars *Sang together*, and when all the Sons of GOD shouted for Joy. I time my INFANCY with that of the Universe, and esteem no Man older or younger than my self, no not the *Angels* themselves, believing that all *Spiritual* Substances were Created together, in the Beginning. I will not, with some, accuse *Moses* of scantiness in his *History of the Creation*, because according to the Letter he seems to take but little notice of *Immaterial Beings*. The *Hebrew Cabbala*, with the Commentaries of their Learned Rabbins, and some of the *Primitive Fathers* of the

I

Christian

Christian Church do sufficiently evince, That there are greater Mysteries contained in the Three first Chapters of *Genesis*, than the bare Letter, or Vulgar Translations seem to exhibit. There is a *Sacrament* in that Holy Language, which whosoever partakes of, can be no Stranger to the Natural and Divine Truths couch'd under it. To such an One, the History of the *Terrestrial Adam's* Happy State in Paradise, and his Banishment from thence, will be an Hieroglyphick of the Original Beatitude of the Immaterial World, and the Degeneracy of Humane Souls, their Descent from the *Ætherial* Mansions, and Confinement to *Houses of Clay*, as well as of the Fall of Angels. I seem to my self, not without Reason, to embrace the Doctrine of the PRÆEXISTENCE OF SOULS, since it was among the *Credenda* of many Ancient Sages, a peculiar Tradition of the *Jews*, and the general Opinion of all the East. That Question which was put to our Saviour concerning the *Man that was born Blind*, Whether it was for his own sins, or those of his Parents, seems clearly to imply, That he was in a Condition or Capacity of sinning before his Birth; which how it could be, without supposing the PRÆEXISTENCE of his Soul, is past my Divinity or Philosophy to unriddle. The various Conjectures also which the *Jews* made of Christ, according to the Report of his Disciples, when some said he was *Elias*, others that he was one of the *Prophets*, a third sort, that he was *John the Baptist risen from the Dead*, are evident Arguments, That the Doctrine of Præexistence, and a *Metempsychosis*, was establish'd as part of the Creed of that Nation. Of which also that passage in the Wisdom of *Solomon* is no obscure hint, where the Author says, *Or rather being a good Spirit, I came into a Body pure and undefiled.* Neither am I startled I find not Christ, or any of his Apostles asserting, or so much at mentioning any such Doctrine. *St. John's Hyperbole* in the last verse of his Gospel, satisfies me, that I must not expect to find all that our Saviour did and said, register'd by the Evangelists: And *St. Paul's* frequent Exhortation to hold fast the Traditions that he had imparted to them, whether by *Word* or *Epistle*, convince me, That it is not unreasonable to conclude, That he deliver'd

deliver'd many Doctrines in his Sermons, which he had no occasion to mention in his *Letters to the Churches*: Among which this might be one. However, it is a sufficient Warrant to my Belief, That I no where in all the Scriptures can find this Doctrine reprehended. Which, had it been an Errour, cou'd not have escaped the censure of Christ and his Apostles, it being the Universal Tenet of all sorts of *Jews*, except the Sadduces. When I consider also that *Origen* and *Ammonius* taught it in the Schools of *Alexandria* (*Plotinus* himself learning it from the latter) and that all the Primitive Fathers who were Platonists, asserted it not only as a Philosophical, but also as a Divine Truth; I look upon it as an Effect of *Gothick Barbarity* and Ignorance, which afterwards overspread all Christendom, That neither this, nor hardly any other Point of *Platonism*, were countenanced in the Christian Schools, but only the Dictates of *Aristotle* and his Ghost *Averroes*. In fine, that elegant Flourish of *St. Augustine*, *Infundendo creatur, creando infunditur*, is no RULE OF MY FAITH in this Point, since it fastens so many irreverent Consequences on GOD Almighty; neither can I believe the Soul to be *ex Traduce*, because it carries in its Front so many Inconsistencies in Philosophy, besides the indignity that is done to the Soul thereby, which amounts to a true *Scandalum Magnatum*, since 'tis levell'd at the whole Order of immaterial Beings I must therefore believe, That I had a Being, LONG before I came into this Body, and yet not resolve the Manner of my Existence into a meer Potentiality, or an unactive slumber in the Bosom of my Causes, as if I were then but a Seminal Idea in the Blood of my Fathers, or a Metaphysicall Dream of my present Life. I believe I was in a State of greater Activity before I was conceiv'd by my Mother, than since she bore me; and for ought I know, have rang'd all the Boundless Tracts of the Universe, been Naturaliz'd in the several Regions of the Sky and Air, till being tyed with so vast a Ramble, and willing to try all States of Life, I was by the Force of a strong Inclination, and the irresistible Charm of rightly adapted Matter, allured into this Terrestrial Body, here to do PENANCE for the Faults of my Superiour Life, and in this Horizon



between the upper and the lower World, to make my Choice of Good or Evil, Light or Darkness, Life or Death. This unlocks all the *Ænigma's* of *Providence*; and reconciles the harsher difficulties with which the Immediate Creation or Traduction of Souls is involved. It is the noblest Instrument of Vertue, the sharpest Spur to a Divine Life, whilst it doubles the Hopes we have of being Immortal *a Parte post*, by assuring us we were so *a Parte ante*. And that it is not from any Arbitrary Decree of GOD, inconsistent with the rest of his Divine Perfections, that we shall live for ever, but from our own Nature and Essence, being Created to subsist an *interminable* duration of Ages.

I believe those Books of the *Holy Scripture*, which are lost, could they possibly be recovered again, would serve as a Lamp, to enlighten us in many *Obscurities* of Religion, History, and Nature: And if the Writings of *Jasher*, *Iddo* the Prophet, &c. could inform us nothing of the *PRÆEXISTENCE* of Souls, 'tis very probable the more early *Oracles* of *Enoch* would, since he was but the *Seventh Soul* that was drench'd in *Terrestrial Matter*, and led so pure and incorrupt a Life, as would tempt one to believe, That he was awaken'd to the Memory of his former state, which for ought we know, might have no small influence on his succeeding Change.

I have often wonder'd where St. *Jude* had so particular an Account of *Michael* the Arch-Angels dispute with the Devil about the Body of *Moses*, that he was able to relate the very words that pass'd between them. Surely the *Jews* had some Books, or at least Traditions, which were believed to be *Orthodox*, tho' they were not so much as mention'd in the Sacred Canon; for we cannot without great Impiety imagine that the Holy Saint wou'd impose upon our Belief any thing that was Foreign or Apocryphal. I am apt to conclude from hence, That there were many *Traditional Doctrines* entertained among the *Hebrews*, which are by us esteem'd no better than Fables.

However, tho' I am thus convinced of the Truth of our *PRÆEXISTENCE*, and that this present Life, is but a Shadow or Dream in comparison of what we

we enjoy'd before our Immersion in the Flesh; yet I wou'd not have this Dream interrupted by any untimely or harsher stroke of destiny. *I shou'd think it no inconvenience to live long!* but rather a Blessing: That so a multitude of years mighe scum off the Froth and Bullage of our Appetites and Passions; that so being gradually wean'd from those low Affections which brought us down to the Earth, we may without any disquiet or turbulency remount to our *Ætherial Homes*. For I am apt to think that those Souls who go out of their Bodies, with any remaining *Relish* upon them of the Body, like Fruit that is either pluck'd off, or shaken down by violent Winds, still retain in their separation, a raw and eager smack of the Flesh, with a languishing Byass towards it. Whereas he that has tarried his full Period in the Body, parts from it with Ease and Willingness, as *Ripe Fruit* drops from the Tree. And therefore I do not wonder that the most general Scene of *Apparitions, Ghosts, &c.* is the Church-yard, or at least that Place where the Body of the *Spectrum* was buried. And the removed Earth which covered the *Cobler of Silesia's Body*, is a shrew'd intimation, That there are some Departed Souls, which if they seek not a Reunion with their Bodies, yet endeavour to hold a *kind of Correspondence* with them, even in the Grave. And tho' the Impossibility of being married again to these their dear *Consorts* after that final Divorce, were enough, one wou'd think, to cure their Impotent Desires, yet they burn with a new Lust, and commit a *Spiritual Adultery* in the unlawful Bed of the Grave. These I look on as the Effects of a *too early* and violent Separation, and therefore esteem *Methuselah* and the Rest of the Fathers before the Flood, happy; who prolong'd their years to the utmost standard of Humane Life, and seem'd not so much to die, (for that imports Violence) as voluntarily to forsake their *old Rotten Habitations*, shake Hands with their Bodies, and so return to the *Ætherial Palaces*, from whence they had so long stragled.

Yet notwithstanding the great Esteem I have of *long Life*, as a Means rather to improve than impair us; I cannot promise my self to out-live a *Jubilee*, tho' I have already seen one Revolution of *Saturn*. Neither do I affect

affect to make *Popes, Emperours, Kings, and Grand Scignours*, the Land-marks in the Chronology of my self; That were to insult over the Royal Ashes of Princes, besides the Ambition in *Ranking* my self in their Number. Methinks I grow old, even at those Years, when the World counts me Young, and possess the Heritage of *David's last Ten Years* of Fourscore, in the Prime of my Age.

Indeed the whole Earth, and all this *Planetary World* seems to droop and decay. Every *Species* of Beings grow weak and languid, and seem to draw near their Dissolution. Yet 'tis needless to engage GOD in the Act, since tho' Creation was above the Force of Nature, yet *Mutation* is not, and no *Annihilation* can proceed from that Paternal Essence of Essences. It seems easie to me to believe, That the World will perish upon the Ruins of its own Principles. And tho' the precise Period of its Destruction be not known to the Angels themselves, yet there are not wanting some *Philosophical Rules*, whereby one might venture to Calculate its Duration, and by observing the various Attempts, Eruptions and Devastations made by FIRE already, one may conjecture about what Time that most *active* Element shall be let loose, to destroy this Face of the World, and transform this *Superannuated* Heaven and Earth into *New Ones*, as the Holy Prophet has foretold. For as to Annihilation, I look on it as a Chimera, or Non Entity, which cannot be said to flow from Him who is *All-being*, and the Fountain of Existence. It were easier to conceive that Cold should be the immediate Effect of Fire, and Darkness the Natural Result of the actual Presence of Light, than to think that *Annihilation, or not Being*, can proceed from Him who is the Original Source of Being, from whose Divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness all Things flow by a *Necessary Emanation*, and continue in their several Perfections by as unalterable a Law as that which gave them; so that there can be no Vacuity supposed in their *Eternal* Subsistence, no Leaps or Starts from *Something* to *Nothing*. It is far more agreeable to the Principles of Philosophy to conceive, That only the Gross and Corruptible Part of  
the



the Universe shall be subject to the *Action of Fire*, such as the Earth we tread on, with the other Planetary Bodies; but that the **PUREST ÆTHER** shall remain for ever untouch'd, unchang'd, the Sanctuary of the Bless'd, the Habitation of the Spirits of *Just Men made Perfect*. I am also confirmed in this Belief by something more Sacred and Authentick than *natural Philosophy*. For when the Royal Psalmist in that Divine Rhapsody, calls upon the *Heavens of Heavens, and the Waters which are above the Heavens*, to praise GOD, he gives this for a Reason, (*viz.*) Because he spake and they were made, he commanded and they were created. He establish'd them to Eternity, and for *Everlasting Ages*: He fix'd a Decree, which he will not disannul. Then he calls upon the Earth and all Creatures therein, to joyn in the same *Act of Praise*, but not for the same Reason; not because the Earth shall endure for ever, but because the Name of GOD alone is exalted, and his Honour above Heaven and Earth. Which Distinction seems to me an evident Argument of the *unalterable Stability of the Cœlestial and Ætherial World*, whatsoever Mutations and Changes the Terrestrial may be subject to.

That those immense Tracts of quiet and impassible Æther shall be the Seat of the Bless'd, is very consistent with Philosophy, and no ways repugnant to Divinity. However, let the Place be where it pleases GOD, we are assured that the *Entertainment* and Joys do far surpass all humane Comprehension. Yet tho' we cannot have adequate Conceptions of supream Felicity, there are some Land-marks, by which we may take imperfect Measures of that *Region of Promise*. The dim Light of Natural Reason may afford us a Glimpse, or faint Prospect of those superlative Joys, and the *Opticks of Faith* will improve the View. We shall have the same Nature and Faculties there as here, but free from the least Alloy of Frailty and Imperfection. Our Souls shall display the radiant Brightness of their Immortal *Essence* with stronger *Vibrations* than the Sun, having no *internal Scum* of Concupiscence, boylling out from the Center of a depraved Will or erroneous Understanding, to blemish and stain those unspotted Orbs of Lights; nor a terrene gross  
Body

## 48 The New Practice of Piety.

Body to Eclipse and shut up their splendors. But being ever bright and serene, they shall shine through their glorified and spiritual Bodies, as the *Sun* does through the *pervious Air*, or at least, as he does on a bright Cloud, which drinks in his Beams to reflect them abroad with a more sensible Glory. We shall then see, not by receiving the Visible Species into the *narrow Glass* of an Organized Eye, we shall then hear without the distinct and curious *Contexture* of an Ear. The Body shall then be *all Eye*, *all Ear*. All *Sense* in the whole, and every *Sense* in every Part. In a word, it shall be all over a common *Sensorium*, and being made of the purest *Aether*, without the Mixture of any lower or grosser Element, the Soul shall by one *undivided Act*, at once perceive all that Variety of Objects, which now cannot without several distinct Organs, and successive Actions or Passions, reach our sense. From this *Superlative Tenuity* and *Claritude* of our Bodies, will arise that *ineffable Delicacy* in the Sensation of the Soul, which will transport it with Delights infinitely transcending the *Height* of Mortal Voluptuousness, nay and even those more exalted Pleasures which the Vertuous sometimes enjoy here on Earth as *Foretastes* of their future Beatitude in Heaven. What here excites but an ordinary Emotion of Joy in the Soul, will there produce all *Raptures* and *Eestases*. We shall be always in *Paroxysms* of Love, such are the transcendent *Beauties* of that admirable Place! and such the divinely amorous Bent of the Soul. We shall be *always languishing*, yet ever enjoying what we languish for: Neither suffering the least Pain through the Want of Fruition, nor through any satiety that shall attend it: But through the *Vigour* of an *Immortal Activity*, we shall have ever freshly kindled Desires and new Enjoyments, being dissolv'd in a *Circle* of *Beatitude* without Measure or End.

Here on Earth Men generally strive to *Monopolize* Pleasure to themselves, there being few of so generous a Temper as to be sensibly touch'd with delight, that another shou'd partake with them in that which they esteem Felicity: This is the *peculiar Advantage* of the Bless'd in Heaven, that even in the *Height* of  
the

## The New Practice of Piety. 49

the Affairs of Immortal Love and Empire, where they possess *Eternal Crowns* and *unfading Beauties*, there is no such Thing to be found as a Rival or Competitor, but every one's Joy is enflam'd by the Enjoyments of another. *Every one loves all, and all love every one.* Neither wou'd their Felicity be Perfect, cou'd any Member of that Happy Society be suppos'd not to have his full proportion and share of Beatitude. So communicative is the Love and Joy of those Holy Souls, that they must cease to love and enjoy themselves, shou'd they desist from loving and rejoycing in the Happiness of their *Fellow-Citizens*. And if we may take our Measures of their Joys from our common Experiences here on Earth, it will be no small Augmentation of their Complacency, to find those *very Friendships which they had contracted here below*, translated to the Mansions above, when they shall both see and know those whom they once loved on Earth, now to be made Denizens with them in Heaven, *with what Ardours will they caress one another!* With what Transports of Divine Affection will they mutually embrace, and vent those Innocent Flames, which had so long lain smothering in the Grave! How passionately Rhetorical and Elegant will their Expressions be, when their Sentiments which Death had Frozen up, when he congeal'd their Blood, shall now be *Thaw'd again in the warm Airs of Paradise!* Like Men that have escap'd a common Shipwrack, and swim safe to the Shore, they will congratulate each other's Happiness with Joy and Wonder. *Their first Addresses will be a Dialect of Interjections and short Periods, the most Pathetick Language of Surprise and high-wrought Joy!* And all their after Converse even to Eternity, will be couch'd in the highest Strains and Flowers of Heavenly Oratory, with Allelujahs intermixt.

It much sweetneth the thoughts of Heaven to me, to remember that there are a multitude of my Friends gone thither; to think such a Friend that died at such a time, and such a Friend that died at such a time, and such a one another time (*O! what a number of them cou'd I name*) and that all these I shall meet again. 'Tis true,  
K in



it's a question with some whether we shall know each other in Heaven or no? But 'tis none with me; for surely there shall no Knowledge cease which now we have, but only that which implyeth our Imperfection, and what Imperfection can this imply? Indeed we shall not know each other *after the flesh*, nor by Stature, Voice, Colour, or outward Shape, nor by Terms of Affinity and Consanguinity, nor by Youth or Age, nor, I think, by Sex, but by the Image of Christ and Spiritual Relation, beyond doubt, we shall know and be known; nor is it only my old Friends (such as *Horneck, Scot, Alsop, Taylor, &c.*) that I shall know in Heaven, but all the Saints of all Ages, whose Faces in the Flesh I never saw. *Lutber* in his last Sickness, being ask'd his Judgment whether we shall know one another in Heaven, answer'd thus, *Quid accidit Adamo? Nunquam ille viderat Evam, &c.* i. e. How was it with *Adam*? He had never seen *Eve*, yet he asketh not who she was, or whence she came, but saith, *She is Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone of my Bone.* And how knew he that? Why, being indued with the true knowledge of *GOD*, he so pronounced; after the same sort shall we be renewed by Christ in another Life. And we shall know our Parents, Wives, Children, &c. much more perfectly than *Adam* did then know *Eve*. In Heaven we shall not only see our Elder Brother Christ, but all our Kindred and Friends that living here in his fear, died in his favour: For since our Saviour tells us, that the Children of the Resurrection shall be *ἰσαγγελοι*, equal to, or like the Angels who yet in the Visions of *Daniel* and *St. John* appear to be acquainted with each other; since in the Parable of the miserable Epicure, and the happy Beggar the Father of the Faithful is represented, as knowing not only the Person, and present Condition, but the past Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Instructor of the Gentiles confidently expects his converted and pious *Thessalonians* to be his Crown at that great Day: Since these Arguments, besides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture, we may safely conclude, that we shall know each other in a place where, since nothing requisite to Happiness can be wanting, we may well suppose that we shall not want so great a Satisfaction

as that of being knowingly happy in our own selves, or Friends.

Thus far we may venture to speak of the lower Degrees of Coelestial Beatitude, the **MUTUAL LOVE AND ENTERTAINMENT OF THE BLESSED**. But who has ever mounted to the Highest Seale of Heavenly Bliss? Let him come down and tell us the Mysteries wrapt up in the Clouds, the Secrets hid within the Veil of Inaccessible Light! Let him describe the Wonders of the Beatifick Vision, and say, how deep the Rivers of Pleasure are, which run by GOD's Right-Hand for evermore! For my part, I must confess. *I'm lost in that Abyss of Wonders*, and therefore modestly withdraw my Pen to Subjects more *Domestick*, and within our Reach, and yet here I shall not pass from *one Abyss to another*, since every thing has a depth in it not to be fathom'd by our weightiest Sense or most solid Reason.

I have often try'd to dive into the **PROFUNDITIES OF DEATH**, but still I find my Intellect too light a Plummert, and the whole *Thread of Life*, though spun out in **FINEST SPECULATIONS** would still prove far too short to reach the endless Bottom.

'Tis true, there have been Men, that have tryed, even in *Death it self*, to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost Faculties of Mind to discover what *this Passage is*; but they are none of them come back to tell us the *News*.

— No one was ever known to wake,  
Who once in Deaths cold Arms a Nap did take.

Lucrer. Lib. 3.

*Caius Julius* being condemn'd by that *Beast Caligula*, as he was going to receive the stroke of the Executioner, was askt by a *Philosopher*, Well *Caius*, said he, whereabout is your Soul now? What is she doing? What are you thinking of? I was thinking, replyed *Caius*, to keep my self ready, and the Faculties of my Mind settled and fix'd, to try if in this short and quick instant of Death I

could perceive the *motion* of the Soul, when she parts from the Body, and whether she has any Resentment at the Separation, that I may after come again to acquaint my Friends with it.

So that I fancy, there is a certain way by which some Men make Trial *what Death is*; but, for my own part, I cou'd ne'er yet find it out.

I have sometimes thought, what would I give for the *least glimpse* of that invisible World, which the first Step I take out of this Body, will present me with; and that there was nothing in the *whole Discourse of Death*, that I durst not meet the boldest way, and have therefore often attempted to LOOK HIM FULL IN THE FACE, that I might learn to die generously, but still when it came to the pinch, *Conscience, that makes Cowards of us all*, made one of me, and I was fore'd to shrink back with shame.

Yet surely the Terrour is not so much in *Death it self*, as the *Tragick Pomp* that goes before and after it. The tedious Discipline of Sickness, the formal Visits of Relations and Friends, their melancholy Looks, the frightful *Harangue* of the Physician, and our own dismal Apprehensions, compose that horrid Scene which renders Death uncomfortable. When the poor Patient, that perhaps may yet *out live his Fears of Death*, and see Millions drop into the Grave before him, yet dies a Thousand DEATHS in his Hag-ridden Phancy, and makes his Bed his Grave, by strength of an abus'd Imagination.

'Tis only Fancy gives Death those hideous Shapes we think him in; for indeed Death is no more than a soft and easie Nothing, or rather *Natures play-day*. I firmly think it is no more to die, than to be born; we felt no pain coming into the World, nor shall we in the act of leaving it, though in the first, one would believe, there were more of Trouble than in the latter, for we *cry coming into the World*, but quietly and calmly leave it. What is Death but a *ceasing to be what we were, before we were*; we are kindled, and put out; to cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same thing. Methinks it is but the other day I came into the World, and anon I am leaving it;  
for



for though I am but in my Fortieth Year, and at present in perfect health and strength, yet I look upon my self as a Man that has one Foot in the Grave already; for David says, seventy is the Age of Man, and I have lived near Forty Years of that time already. The longest of my design now is not above a years extent, I think of nothing now but ending, take my last leave of every place I depart from; alas! there is no fooling with Life, when it is once turn'd beyon'd Thirty. Silence was a full answer of him that being ask'd what he thought of Humane Life, said nothing, turn'd him round and vanish. **OH, HOW TIME RUNS AWAY!** and we are Dead, e'er we have time to think our selves alive; one doth but Breakfast here, another Dine; he that liveth longest, doth but Sup, we must all go to Bed in another World, therefore good Night to you here, and good Morrow hereafter.

Indeed our whole Life is but one often repeated Step to Death, and we are as near it at the first Minute of our setting out as at a hundred years end. For Death either keeps an even Collateral Pace with us from our very Birth, or at least, he marches but one Step behind us all the way of our Life; so that when the appointed Time is come for him to execute his Commission, he soon can reach forth his Hand, arrest us, and stop our farther Journey. Man in the Vigour and prime of his Years, Phancies himself in the midst of a vast Plain; he looks behind him, and numbers all the weary Steps of Life he has already taken, perswades himself that Death must also measure the same space of years in his Pursuit, before he can o'ertake him; then turning his Eyes before, he sees a boundless Tract, an indeterminate Set of years; being thus deluded by the Incharmed Prospect, he rushes on, and bids defiance to pale languid Death, imagining he sees him lagging afar off, at the first entrance of all the wide-stretch'd Waste; whereas the nimble Skeleton is as far advanc'd as he, only keeps out of Sight, and will never be seen, till the very Moment he gives the Fatal Stroke. To whatsoever **LIGHT** Man turns his Face, Death, like his Shadow, whips behind him still, and is at his Back, but ne'er will **FACE HIM TILL THE LATEST GASP.**  
And

And he that can stoutly bear his Looks for that one Moment, shall never see him more to all Eternity. 'Tis but the Fear of this Moments Pain, that makes our Lives so uneasie all along. And I am really asham'd of this incorrigible Folly of Mortals, who spend so many years in painful Disquisitions how to protract the Pain of one poor Moment, and undergo ten times more Labour to escape it, than they can possibly feel in undergoing it. I admire the Resolution of the *Indian Wives*, who in contempt of Death, scorn to survive their Husband's Funeral Pile, but with chaste Zeal, and an undaunted Courage, throw themselves into the Flames, as if they were then going to the Nuptial Bed. Certainly they calculate aright, who reckon the Day of Death, the Day of our Nativity, since we are then Born to the Possession of Immortal Life. For this Reason I Honour the Memory of *Judovicus Cartesius* the *Paduan* Lawyer, who, in his Last VVill and Testament, ordered, that no sad Funeral Rites should be observ'd for him, but that his Corps should be attended with *Musick and Joy* to the Grave, and as if it were the Day of his Espousals, he commanded that Twelve Suits of Gay Apparel should be provided instead of Mourning, for an equal Number of Virgins, who should usher his Body to the Church.

I have but small Acquaintance with the FUTURE STATE, but this I'm sure, there will be no change that will be so surprizing to me, as that BY DEATH. It is a thing of which I know but little, and none of the Millions of Souls that have past into the INVISIBLE WORLD, have come again to tell me how it is.

I.

*It must be done (my Soul) but 'tis a strange,  
A Dismal and Mysterious change,  
When thou shalt leave this Tenement of Clay,  
And to an unknown somewhere wing away;  
When Time shall be Eternity; and thou (not how)  
Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou know'st*

II.

*Amazing State! No wonder that we dread  
To think of Death, or view the Dead,  
Thou'rt all wrapt up in Clouds, as if to thee  
Our very Knowledge had Antipathy.  
Death could not a more sad retinue find,  
Sickness, and pain before, and darkness all behind.*

III.

*Some courteous Ghost tell this great Secrecy,  
What 'tis you are, and we must be.  
You warn us of approaching Death, and why  
May we not know from you what 'tis to dye?  
But you having shot the Culph, delight to see  
Succeeding Souls plunge in with like uncertainty.]*

—Norris.

That the Souls of Men do not expire with the Breath and vital Union, or fall into a DEEP SLEEP, never to be awaked 'till the General Resurrection, according to the Opinions of some drowsy People, whose Reasons at present are asleep in their Bodies, is a Truth (I think) easible evincible, out of the Topicks of ALL RELIGIONS, that make any Noise and Figure in the World, out of the Clear Text of sacred Scripture, and from the very Nature of our Souls, as they now are, and all in the Body, whilst in Union with it. One of the Fathers calls the GOOD ANGELS (Evocatores Animarum) the Callers forth of Souls, and such as shew them, The Preparation of those Mansions, they are going to.

Hence



Hence we observe when good Men are dying, they are often in silent Raptures, and express a kind of Impatience, till they are dissolved, and *Why?* because they spiritually see what they cannot utter, as did *St. Paul*, when he *was wrapt up into the Third Heaven*. There is a kind of a **DRAUGHT** presented by their Guardian Angels of those transcendent Joies, they are almost ready to enter in possession of, and therefore Long and Pine till they are conveyed into that place of unspeakable Felicity. These *Heavenly Spirits* succour and support us under our Pain and Sickness; and when our Souls are storm'd out of our Bodies, they encompass and embrace them, soaring through the Regions of Evil-Angels, into Heaven. 'Tis said that *LAZARUS* was safely carried by the Angels into Abraham's Bosome, so that 'tis plain, that the Angels are employed to convey the Souls of true Believers into a fixed State of Blessedness—

It is very desirable to know in what Condition our Souls will be, when they leave the Body, and what is the Nature of that abode into which we must go, but which we never saw into; and through what Regions we must then take our Flight, and after what manner this will be done. 'Tis certain my Soul will then preserve the Faculties that are natural to it, viz. to understand, to will, to remember, as 'tis represented to us, under the Parable of Dives and Lazarus: But alas! we little know how the People of the disembodied Societies act, and will, and understand, and communicate their thoughts to one another, and therefore I long to know it. What Conception can I have of a separated Soul (says a late Writer) but that 'Tis all Thought. I firmly think, when a Mans Body is taken from him by Death, he is turn'd into all Thought and Spirit; How great will be its Thought, when it is without any Hinderance from these Material Organs, that now obstruct its Operations. **IN THAT ETERNITY** (as one expresses it) *The whole Power of the Soul runs together one and the same way*. In Eternity the Soul is united in its Motions, which way one Faculty goes, all goe; and the Thoughts all are concentr'd, as in one whole Thought of Joy or Torment.

These

These Things have occasion'd great Variety of Thoughts in me, and my Soul, when it looks towards the other World, and thinks it self NEAR, it can no more cease to be inquisitive about it, than it can cease to be a Soul.

It will not, I hope, be an unpardonable Transition, if I start back from the melancholy Horrors of Death, to the innocent Comforts of *Humane Life*; and from the Immortal Nuptials of this *Italian*, pass to the Mortal Emblem, the Rites of Matrimony, the Happiness of *Female Society*, and our obligations to Women. 'Tis an uncourtly Vertue, which admits of no Proselytes but Men devoted to Celibacy, and he is a Reproach to his Parents, who shuns the Entertainments of Hymen, the blissful Amours of the Fair Sex, without which he himself had not gain'd so much as the Post of a *Cypher*, in the Numeration of Mankind, though he now makes a Figure too much in Natures Arithmetick, since he wou'd put a stop to the Rule of *Multiplication*. He is worse than *Numa Pompilius*, who appointed but a set Number of Virgins, and those were free to Marry, after they had guarded the Sacred Fires, the Term of Four Years: Whereas if his morose Example were follow'd, all Women should turn *Vestals* against their wills, and be consecrated to a peevish *Virginity* during their Lives. I wonder at the unnatural Phancy of such as could wish we might procreate like Trees, as if they were ashamed of the Act, without which they had never been capable of such an extravagant Thought; or like *Alphonsus King of Spain*, would correct the Institutions of Heaven, and say, had they been present with GOD, when he commanded *Adam and Eve* to encrease and multiply, they would have propos'd a better method for Generation. Certainly he that Created us, and has riveted the Love of Women in the very Center of our Natures, never gave us those passionate Desires to be our incurable Torment, but only as Spurs to our Wit and Vertue, that by the Dexterity of the One, and the Integrity of the Other, we might Merit and Gain the *Darling Object* which should consummate our Earthly Happiness.

I do not patronize the Smoak of those *Dunghill-Passions*, who only court the Possessions of an Heiress, and fall in Love with her Money. *This is to make a Market of Women*, and prostitute the Noblest Affection of our Souls, to the sordid Ends of Avarice. Neither do I commend the softer Aims of those, who are wedded only to the *Charming Lineaments* of a Beautiful Face, a clear Skin, or a well shap'd Body. 'Tis only the Virtue, Discretion, and good Humour of a Woman, could ever captivate me; and I am bless'd in a Mate who has her Share, both of these, and the other exterior Ornaments.

I hate the Cynical Flout of those who can afford Women no better Title than *Necessary Evils*, and the lewd Poetical License of him who made this Anagram, *Uxor & Orcus—idem*. That Oratour whisper'd the *Doctrine of Devils*, who said, Were it not for the Company of Women, Angels would come down and dwell among us, I rather think, were it not for such ill-natur'd Fellows as he, Women themselves would prove Angels.

'Tis an ungrateful Return, thus to abuse that *Gentle Sex*, who are the Moulds in which all the Race of Adam are cast: As if they deserv'd no better Treatment at our Hands, than we usually give to Saffron Bags and Verde Bottles, which are thrown into a Corner, when the Wine and Spice are taken out of them. The Pagan Poet was little better than a Murderer, who allow'd but two good Hours to a Woman.

Τὴν μίαν ἐν θαλάμῳ τὴν μίαν ἐν θαλάττῳ.

*Unam in Thalamo, alteram in Tumulo.*

For my Part, I should esteem the World but a *Desert*, were it not for the Society of the *FAIR SEX*; and the most polished Part of Mankind wou'd appear but like Hermits in Masquerade, or a kind of *Civilized Satyrs*, so imperfect and unaccomplish'd is our Virility, without the Reunion of our *lost Rib*, that Substantial and Integral Part of our Selves. Those who are thus disjointed



joynted from Women, seem to inherit *Adam's Dreams*, out of which nothing can awake them, but the Embraces of their own living Image, the Fair Traduct of the first Metamorphosis in the World, *the Bone converted into Flesh*. They are always in Slumbers and Trances, ever separated from themselves, in a *wild Pursuit* of an intolerable Loss, nor can any thing fix their Volatile Desires, but the powerful Magnetism of some Charming Daughter of Eve. These are the Centers of all our Desires and Wishes, the true *Pandoras* that alone can satisfy our longing Appetites, and fill us with *Gifts and Blessings*; in them we live before we breathe, and when we have tasted the *Vital Air*, 'tis but to die an amorous Death, that we may live more pleasantly in them again. They are the *Guardians of our Infancy*, the *Life and Soul of our Youth*, the *Companions of our Riper years*, and the *Cherishers of our Old Age*. From the Cradle to the Tomb, we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them for their Love and good Offices. And he is a Monster in Nature, who returns them not the Caresses of an *Innocent Affection*, the Spotless Sallies of *Vertue and Gratitude*. Love is the *Soul of the World*, the *Vital Prop* of the Elements, 'tis the *Cement of Humane Society*, the strongest Fence of Nature: Earth would be a Hell without it, neither can there be any Heaven where this is absent.

Yet I am no *Advocate* for those general Lovers, who not content to let this active Passion run within the lawful Channel of chaste Marriage, swell it up with irregular Tides, and wanton Flouds of Lust, till it wash away the Banks of Reason and Mortality, find our new Passages and Rivulets, encroaching on other Mens Possessions, or at least dilating on the general waste of the weaker Sex, who ought to be as *Gardens enclos'd*, or holy Ground, not to be prophan'd by the Access of every bold Intruder.

I approve not the Incestuous Mixtures of the *Chinese*, where the Brother Marries the Sister, or next a-kin; nor the Sensual Latitude of the *Mahometans*, who allow every Man four Wives, and as many Concubines as he can maintain. But above all, I detest the VVild and Brutal

60      **The New Practice of Piety.**

Liberty of that *Philosopher*, who in his Idea of Humane Happiness, conceiv'd a promiscuous Copulation *ad Libitum*, to be a necessary Ingredient of our Bliss.

On the other side, My Regards to that Sex are not circumscrib'd within such narrow Limits, as to exclude any from our Conversation and Friendship, that by any warrantable Title can lay a Just Claim to it; I would have our Commerce with Females *as General* as is their Number that deserve it, whose Knowledge and Vertue will be a sufficient security from *criminal Familiarities*, and from the Scandals of the *World*. There are among that Sex, as among Men, Good and Bad, Vertuous and Vicious, and a Prudent Man will so level his Choice, as not to stain his Reputation, or hazard his Integrity. 'Tis no small Point of Discretion, I own, to *regulate our Friendships with Women*, and to walk evenly on the Borders and very Ridge of a *Passion*, whose next Step is a precipice of Flames, not kindled from the Altar of Vertue, However, 'tis not impossible to *conserve Innocency, on the Frontiers of Vice*. There is no Difference of Sex among Souls, and a Masculine Spirit may inhabit a Womans Body. It is disingenuous to rob Vertue of the Advantages it receives from Beauty, which makes it appear like Diamonds enchain'd in Gold, and gives it a greater Lustre. Reason it self will appear more Eloquent in the Mouth of a fair Maid, than in that of the most Florid Orator: And there are no Figures in all the System of Rhetorick so moving and forcible, as the peculiar Graces of that Sex. I am of Opinion that Men can boast of no Endowments of the Mind, which Women possels not in as great, if not a greater Eminency. There have been *Muses as well as Amazons*, and no Age or Nation but has produced some Females Renowned for their Wisdom or Vertue. Which makes me conclude, that the Conversation of Women, is no less useful than pleasant; and that the Dangers which attend their Friendships and Commerce, are recompens'd by vast Advantages.

But

But whatever may be adduced against the *Friendships* we contract with Women, there is not in all the *Magazine of Detraction*, any Weapon of Proof against the mutual Intimacies of our own Sex, the generous *Endearments of Souls truly Masculine and Vertuous*, united by *Sympathies and Magnets whose Root is in Heaven*. No *Panegyricks* can reach the Worth of these Divine Engagements, since they admit not of any Mediocrity, but derive their *Value only from their Excess*. I have been always slow and cautious in contracting Amities, lest I should run the *Risque* of his Mistake, who while he thought he had an Angel by the Hand, held the Devil by the Foot: But where I have once *pitch'd* my Affection, I love without Reserve or Rule. I never entertain without suspicion the warm Professions of Love, which some Men are apt to make at first sight. Such *Mushroom-Friendships* have no deep Roor, and therefore most commonly, wither as soon as they are form'd, Yet I deny not, but that there are some *secret Marks* and Signature which Souls ordain'd for Love and Friendship can read in each other at a Glance, by which that Noble Passion is excited, that afterwards displays it self in more apparent Characters. This is the *silent Language* of Platonick Love, wherein the Eye supplies the Office of the Tongue; 'tis the *Rhetorick of Amorous Spirits*, wherein they make their Court without a Word. There are some lasting Friendships which owe their Birth to such an Interview, but their Growth and Fastness proceeds from other Circumstances, being cherish'd by frequent Conversation, repeated good Offices, and an inviolate Fidelity, which are the only proper and substantial Aliment of Love. 'Tis impossible to fix a durable Friendship, where-ever we place a *Transient Inclination*, because of the insuperable Necessities which divide particular Men from each others Commerce or Knowledge, after they have began to Love. In the Orb of this Life, Men are like the Planets, which now and then cast friendly Aspects on each other *en Passant*: But following the Motion of the Greater Sphere of Providence, they are again separated, their Influences dissolv'd and new Amours commenc'd. But I would have my Friendship, resemble the *Fixed Stars* and Constellations,



ons, who in the Eternal Revolution never part Company or Interests.

I have ever look'd on those Men to be but *one step* differenc'd from Beasts, whose Love is confined only to their own Families Kindred. Such a narrow Affection deserves not to be rank'd in the *Pradicament of Humanity*. My Love is communicative, it makes a large Progress, and extends it'selt to Strangers; it takes in Men of different Humours and Complexions, Customs and Languages, it refuses none that have the *Face of Men*, but with wide-open'd Arms embraces all that bear the stamp of Humane Nature. And I have this *peculiar in my Temper*, that I find not the least Reluctancy in loving and doing Good to my *Enemies*. That which costs others so much Labour and Toil to perswade themselves to, is to me as familiar and easie, as to laugh at a ridiculous Object, and I esteem it not so properly a Vertue in my self, as a Gift of Nature, the Effect of my Constitution.

Yet I cannot pretend to such an *universaliz'd Spirit*, as to be without my *Antipathies*. I esteem Hatred to be as necessary and allowable a Passion as Love, provided it be exercis'd on its proper Objects, since as the one fastens us to those Things which procure our Happiness; so the other snatches us from what would be the Cause of our Misery. I observe, that these *contrary Faculties* are inherent in all Creatures, neither could the Creation subsist, were it not for the Discords as well as the Agreements of the Elements. The whole Universe subsists by the *Oppositions of its Parts*, and the Epitome of it, our Microcosm, is preserv'd by its *intestine Divisions*. So that I cannot apprehend a more immediate Way for the Supreme Architect, to overthrow his Works, than by diffusing that *Nepenthe* through the Elements, which should compose their Quarrels; for they wou'd no sooner cease to hate their *Contraries*, but they would also desist from loving themselves; and having thus lost the Cement which fastens them together in this exquisite Order, they must necessarily return to their Primitive Chaos out of which they were extracted.

However I will not from these *innocent Feuds of inanimate Creatures*, draw Arguments to countenance in my self a Hatred

Hatred which is Criminal, being assured that among those various Aversions, which molest the Quiet of Men, there is hardly one which is not against Reason or Morality. Every Creature bears in its Essence the Stamp of Infinite Goodness; and 'twere gross impiety to calumniate any of those Works, on which GOD Himself has bestow'd an universal Panegyrick; when he pronounc'd them all to be Good. They are all lovely in their Order, and those which our Squeamish Phancies esteem the most odious, have Qualities which claim our Love and Admiration. Those venomous Creatures, which we shun as the inveterate Enemies of our Race, deserve our Caresses, instead of our Spight; since the Service they afford us, equals the Hurt we receive from them, and the most Efficacious Medicines are sometimes compounded of the fiercest Poysons. In strict speaking, the Devils themselves are not the Object of my Hatred, according to their Essence, though they are so by the Malice of their Will. They still retain their Natural Perfections, and the Goodness of their Essence remains the same as it was before their Fall. Their Vigour, their and Intellectual Accomplishments, have suffered no Detriment from the Depravedness of their Affections, but remain untouch'd, as when they shone among the Hierarchies above. And tho' GOD detests and punishes them for their Crimes, yet he Himself loves and conserves their Essence. There is Nothing therefore in Heaven, Earth or Hell, but SIN, that deserves our Hatred; with all things else, we may be enamour'd; and we ought to hate this Monster so much the more, in that by disordering our Natures, it has planted in us those Antipathies and Aversions which make us peevish at the Works of GOD, and hate those Things which we ought to love.

But among all the Species of Hatred, I tremble at that which is exercis'd against our own Race, because I find none so violent, none so inexorable as one Man against another. They are not content with the most furious Sallies of this Passion, during their Lives, but to consummate the Height of their Malice, they willingly involve themselves in Death. With Atreus they take Delight in their own Ruine, provided Thyestes may be crush'd

in

## 64 The New Practice of Piety.

It is too. Nay, this passion is immortal, and descends into the very Grave. The Antipathies of *Etheocles* and *Palenius*, were translated to the other World, their Hated surviv'd their Breath, it liv'd in their Ashes and wou'd not suffer their divided Flames to mix in the same Funeral Pile. Above all, I abhor the *Italians* inflexible Cruelty, who bequeath their Hatred as an Inheritance to their Children, adjuring them to Eternal Enmity, with Curses on such of their Off-spring as shall ever make Peace with their Foes.

I quarrel not with that *Logick*, by which we call a Toad venomous. 'Twou'd prove but a thin *Sophistry*, that should impose on us the Safety of the Experiment; and I doubt our best *Metaphysicks* wou'd make but a weak Antidote against the Forces of its Poyson. I am not fond of quibbling my self into so dangerous an Absurdity, under the Protection of a refin'd Theory, whose Practice wou'd convince me of a foolish Madness, and that I were neither good Philosopher nor Divine. Yet I cannot say I hate even this Creature, which is become the Proverb of Humane hatred: For as much as it carries with it, in its Life and Motion, the Character and Impression of a Divine Artificer; especially for this reason, that we have no cause to believe it ever sinned, and consequently thereupon maintains and performs the end and design of its Creation, which tho' it be in a lower Sphere, has this Prerogative beyond Mankind; that it never yet transgress'd the Rules, nor violated the Laws of its Maker. Nor can I imagine whence our Reflections upon such Creatures should arise, but from a mistaken Knowledge of our selves, and a perfect Ignorance of the Nature of all things beside.

'Tis under the Prejudice of Education, and most detested ERRORS OF OUR LIFE. Have not some People liv'd upon that, and deliciously too, that is another Man's Poyson? Did not *Mithridates* take Poyson till the strongest Confection of that Kind would not do his business, when he wanted it? 'Tis to that we are to ascribe the Mischiefs of Humane Life. For if we could once forsake the false Guide we have been us'd to, and consult our own Reason, there's nothing would seem strange to us,  
nothing



nothing uneasy, nothing dreadful. Therefore I shall a little Descant upon this Subject, in order to Rectifie our Judgments, and Reform our Practices.

It is enough already, that I have lived for others. Let me at last return home, and do somewhat for my self. Time flies away, Nature decays, and I shall soon find my self most unfit for the work, when I shall stand most in need of strength to do it. To what purpose is it, we are so busily concern'd in *Exotick Affairs*, things neither consistent with our present Peace, nor conducive to our future Happiness?

Mankind is all *Labyrinth*, and *Disguise*, and never shows the same Face two Hours together. I know my self better than all the Men in the World know me, and can be more just and faithful, according to Truth, in my Judgment and Censure. They set up a *Rule*, and try all Complexions and Temperaments by *That*, wildly, unreasonably, and uncertainly. I daily find them miserably out in their Conjectures of me, even those who think they best know me. They may frame a general *Air* of my Humour, by a frequent Conversation, but are wonderfully mistaken in their Application, as to the Ends, Inducements and Motives of most of my Actions.

The most stupid *Soul* that is, will sometimes *work* upon her self, review her own Thoughts and Inclinations, and would delight to be more Conversant in this Exercise, if we did not interrupt her Meditation by the Proposal of external Objects, which do not at all concern her. It is the best Acquaintance we can have, and would deal more faithfully and wisely in her Advise-ments than the best Friend we know upon Earth. It is, I am confident, the want of this Intelligence that occasions all the Irregularities and Disorders we are *guilty* of. Remember to make *Reason* and *Conscience* of your *Party*, and you will soon perceive your Anxiety, and Torment abated. Then should we not only be *Wise*, but in a great measure *Happy* to boot: And, for ought I know, in as high a Degree as humane Nature is capable of attaining.

I could (in some fits of contemplative Melancholy) fall a sleep as soon in a Church-Yard as on my Bed; and am often so weary of dull Life, that my great-

## 52 The New Practice of Piety.

est delight is in such *Objects* as speak most to it's *Advantage*.

I know that I carry a *Ghost* always about me, and that I my self am a *Walking Spirit*. This thought allays in me those vulgar *Fears* of the *Haunts* and *Visits* of *Spectres*. And as I am not at all afraid of my self, so I am very little apprehensive of *Apparitions*: Nay more, I could wish the *Communications* more frequent betwixt us and the *Inhabitants* of the *Upper World*: It would harden our *Christian Courage*, familiarize to us the *Thoughts* of *Separation*; and create in us a more passionate love of the *Heavenly Country*.

I pretend not by the *Title* of this small Treatise to any extraordinary *Scheme* or new draught of Religion, for my *Athenian Querists*; much less would I be thought slightly to suggest any neglect or deficiency of theirs in the *PRACTICE* of the *Old*: I am very well assur'd, that *Religio Athena*, seems a direct *Tautologie*. But surely it can be no Offence to say, that I could wish we were all more in earnest for Heaven, and that we had all the *Wisdom* and *Virtue* that ever appeared in the *guise* of true Reason in the *World*, summ'd up and amassed in a *Christian Virtuoso*, especially in a daily sincere contempt of this *World*.

No eager pursuit, or restless intemperate desire of *Wealth* or *Honour*, must be harboured by us, who are to fix our whole hopes on another *Country*; and we should confess our selves *Strangers* and *Pilgrims* on this *Earth*, by the *Precepts* and *Examples* of all the *Holy Prophets* and *Apostles* throughout the whole *Book* of *GOD*. To set an extraordinary *Value* on the *World*, is to unravel the peculiar Principle of *Christianity*, and run retrograde to the Steps of the *Holy JESUS*.

Thus have I made a considerable *Progress* in my *New Practice of Piety*, wherein my aim has been to discover an *Universal Doctrine* (or make such *SPECULATIONS*) as no ways opposeth the *Religion* established among

## The New Practice of Piety. 49

mong us, but which may tend to unite us all in the same Church.

A Perfect Atheist, is fit for no Place here but *Bedlam*, and therefore I began my Essay with a *New Scheme of Religion*, I began first with *Divine Worship*, in Obedience to GOD's Commandment, who wills us first to seek the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Righteousness thereof, promising that all other things shall be added unto us, and having given a *GENERAL SCHEME* of the way to Heaven, I shall conclude this *First Part* of my Book with discovering here that right Religion that will lead us to it. And I shall be the *PLAINER* upon this Subject, as our mistaking the *ROAD* to Heaven, may lead us to Hell.

*Religion in General, is a sense of our Duty to GOD, and the Worship we owe to him, according to the best of our Understanding, in order to the obtaining of a Blessed Immortality.*

But Religion in this Age, admits of so many several Modes and Forms, that a Man can now no sooner speak of Religion, but the next Question is—*P R A Y* *W H A T* Religion are you of?—To this I answer, *GOD is my Father, the Church my Mother* (I need not say this of that Church, if I am sound in the *Main Points*) the *Saints my Brethren*, and all that needs me my *Friends*: 'Tis true, I worship *GOD* under the Title of a *CHURCH-MAN*, but dislike all Names, but that which the Disciples were called at *Antioch*, that is, I wou'd be neither *Church-man, Presbyterian, Independent Anabaptist, Quaker, &c.* but a *Christian*, a Follower of Christ, a Servant of *GOD*, the Worlds Master, and my own Man. I do not think Religion to consist so much in *NAMES* as Things. Christ's Church is not limited to any Nation or Party, but extends to all Places, is propagated in all Ages, and containeth all saving Truth; and in this Sense is *UNIVERSAL*, or *Catholic*. 'Tis true, Religion is divided into subordinate *Sects and Branches*, yet the Essence is the same in every Part; and for that Reason the Right Christian does Love and Honour the Pious Men and Preachers of either Opinions; as David did favour both *Zadock and Abiathar*, Priests of



Diverse Families (a) as Saint Paul did Joy, that Christ was preached, tho' by them that were of a contrary Faction; as Jacob had a Right Hand for Ephraim, and a Left for Manasses: Paul and Barnabas jarred, yet both Preach'd the Gospel; Cyprian and Cornelius differed in Judgment, yet both Pillars of the Christian Faith; Chrysostom and Epiphanius disagreed, yet both Enemies to the Arrians; Hierome and Ruffinus, were divided, yet in the end were reconciled; and I verily think all ENGLISH Protestants wou'd soon UNITE in one National Church, did we seriously consider that all those that are converted by the Holy Ghost, are one Holy Church (already) whereof CHRIST is the only Head. I shall venture to say all that outwardly profess Christianity, and have been Baptized, are to be accounted Holy, by a visible separation and Dedication to GOD, till they cut themselves off by SCHISM, are or justly cast out by Excommunication.

I profess my self an Impartial Lover of all Good Men, and do presume every Man to be good, till I find him otherwise. I have as little Zeal about things that are manifestly INDIFFERENT (either Pro or Con) as any Man in the World, for 'tis a Principle I receiv'd from my Education, *That the Real Differences of Good and Intelligent People, are not so wide as they seem;* and that through Prejudice and Interest, they do many times contest about words, whilst they do heartily think the same thing. Then let those little narrow soul'd Christians, that appropriate their Faith and Charity to a CANTON, live in a little Corner of the World by themselves; they are hardly worthy to enjoy the Benefit of a Universal Sun and Gospel. I hope Church-men, Presbyterians, Independents, &c. will all meet in Heaven at last. What tho' they differ in their WAY thither? I hope they Pardon one another; Men go to China both by the Streights, and by the Cape: A Right Christian may go to Heaven with any Wind, and with any Name; Religious Men (such as Mr. Bennet, and Mr. Shepherd) have no other End in all

---

(a) 2 Sam. 20. 25. Phil. 1. 18. Acts 15. 39.

their Disputes, but to send us *all in the Right way to Heaven.*

But whilst you are only for the out-side, gild'ed part, or husk of Religion, you are but for a Faction, and a Party, and you have no Communion with the *Universal Church of Christ*; you are but for Christians of your own Size, and live and grow up into a little *Creeping* narrow Spirit that can never love nor serve any Soul, but what is just and directly of your own dimension; whereas a Christian of the *Universal Church* is of a large comprehensive Generous Spirit and Principle, and loves a good and Vertuous Man, that practices *Right Christianity*, let his perswasion in other and minuter things be what it will, for this is *God's Religion*, all other is but *Man's*, and subject to Innovation, and changes, according as their Humours vary: Hence it is that those that are so *furious*, for formal and outward Rites, are always *sowre and quarrelsome*, fretting themselves, and vexing others, if they come not up to every *Punctilio* of their Observances. And it is also from hence, that the *High-Flyers*, are every where laying out, and engaging themselves and Interest, in getting the *worst of Magistrates, the worst Parliament-Men, the worst Justices, the worst Mayors, &c.* that all the Countries and Cities can afford; in so much that it is almost become the surest Indication of a Knave, to have the *High-Flyers* for 'em; and of an Honest Man to have 'em against him, that can be given: For their *Breath* blesses every Man they are against, and blasts every Man they are for.

But whatever the Principles of others are, yet (as to my self) *I am or should be an honest Man*, and no Name deserves that Character so well as that of *Christian*. All *opprobrious Distinctions of Sects and Schisms*, do as 'twere feed upon *Christianity in the Substance*.

*I value no Man meerly because he is of this or the other Party; but I love a Good Man, of whatever Profession, or by what Name or Title soever, he's distinguish'd; but (as I said before) I dislike all Names, but that of CHRISTIAN, and think 'em a great abuse.*

But

But I fear most Men know not, or forget, what it is to be a *Right Christian*; and what that worthy Name doth oblige them to, which was the Name whereby all *Christ's Disciples* were called, before all those Names were known in the World, whereby since they have been *distinguish'd or Reproach'd*. And as it was the first Name given on Earth, so it may probably continue for ever in Heaven; For of *Christ the whole Family of Heaven and Earth is named*, as the Apostle speaks.

I find all Parties ready to reflect one upon another, whereas all may be guilty; and while each are contending for some Particular Opinions and Circumstances in Religion, they may evidently transgress the Rules of Common Christianity; while some are called *Papists*, others *Protestants*, some *Conformists*, others *Dissenters*; all are apt to forget they are called *CHRISTIANS*; and tho' in doubtful Things it is commendable to search out Truth, and plead for it; yet not with minds possess'd with *Passion or Prejudice*, which blind the Judgment, and break the Bonds of *Unity, Love and Peace*; like the Two Men mention'd by *Anselm*, who disputing, and then falling to Blows in the Morning, about the Place where the Sun wou'd rise, beat out one another's Eyes, and so neither of 'em could see it.

Its no great Advantage to a Man be a *Papist, Churchman, Presbyterian*, &c. if he be not a *Right Christian*; but (alas!) our Greatest Zeal is about those things, for the most part, that are not necessary to Salvation, and which may leave us short of *Heaven*.

Such *Speculations* as these (seriously weigh'd) wou'd bring us all to an *Union in Religion*, and for ever banish those Nicknames of *Presbyterians, Independents*, &c. These with the Title of *High-Church-Men*—— &c. are 'New Terms of Distinction' (a) rais'd on design to distract 'us yet more; I know no *High-Church* but the Church of 'Rome; so here we see who are to be called *High-Church*,

---

(a) See the Bishop of Salisbury's Speech to the House of Lords upon the Bill against Occasional Conformity.



## The New Practice of Piety. 53

‘ our Legal Establishment founded upon the Primitive Pattern,  
 ‘ is the same true Measure of our Church, and those who  
 ‘ rise above it, are as much out of the way, as those who  
 ‘ fall below it—

I cou’d enlarge in these Speculations, but that I am unwilling to transgress my Bounds. But certainly, unless Men take this moderate Road for the way to Paradise, I can see no Hopes of an Union among the several Sects of the Christian Religion, but a continual jarring till they get to Heaven, where no doubt they’ll A L L Embrace and UNITE as Brethren : For, as Herbert says,

*All we know o’th’ Bless’d Above,  
 Is, that they Sing, and that they Love.*

Thus Reader have I Plainly discovered what that Right Religion is that will lead us to Heaven, by which the Dissenters may see that Occasional Conformity is no such Scandalous Trimming between Two Religions, as some wou’d make it; but has been practiz’d by the best Christians of all Ages. Neither is Occasional Dissenting, (however New the Doctrine may seem) a forsaking the Church of England, but a Real Duty in some Cases : For my own share, I am a profest Enemy to Bigots of all Religions ; and tho’ I have been a Son of the Church, these Forty Years, yet I thank GOD, I was never fetter’d with superstitious scruples, and I heartily pity those that are, for they are generally such as are riding Post after Preferment, or (like Dor——n and W——y) have been Apostates to the Dissenters.

I am none of those who Acknowledge no Temples, besides those of their own Heads. And I am of Opinion that such Furious Guides as think that they have a Church within their own Breasts, shou’d likewise believe that their Heads are Steeples, and so shou’d provide them with Bells. I believe that there is a Church Militant, which like the Ark, must lodge in its Bowels all such as are to be saved from the Flood of Condemnation ; but to chalk out its bordering Lines, is beyond the Geography of my Religion.

‘ Then

## 54 The New Practice of Piety.

' Then let Furious Bigots act as they please, *I shall ever*  
 ' be of an Extensive Charity to all *Protestants*, where I  
 ' see any thing of the Image of our COMMON LORD;  
 ' I have long understood the Difference between Matters  
 ' of Faith, and meer *Circumstantials*; and am for the  
 ' Union of all *Christians*, that do not differ in things Essen-  
 ' tial to Christianity. I do not understand what the  
 ' *Jus Divinum* of disputable Ceremonies means; I am of  
 ' great Latitude in such Matters, and therefore (as was  
 ' said of King *William*) as I do not censure the form of  
 ' Kneeling, so I think that of sitting, as Eligible where it  
 ' obtains. I look upon it to be as Impertinent an Attempt to  
 ' endeavour to bring all Mens Minds and Consciences to  
 ' one Standard, as to undertake that *all the Clocks in the*  
 ' *World shou'd strike continually at the same Minute, without*  
 ' *any Variation*. I think every Right Christian shou'd Imit-  
 ' rate the Moderation and Piety, of *William the III.* who  
 ' declar'd with his dying Breath, *That he dyed a Christian,*  
 ' *of a comprehensive Charity*. With every serious consider-  
 ' ing Mind, this must surely have a much greater and  
 ' better sound than to have said, *I dye in the inclos'd Com-*  
 ' *munion of one or other Party, or Denomination of Christians*;  
 ' nor do I see how any one can safely leave the World,  
 ' however they make a Shift to live in it, without a *Cha-*  
 ' *rity that reaches to all serious Christians*, under whatever  
 ' distinguishing Name they pass. And let others confine  
 ' their Candour and Communion, within narrower  
 ' Limits, if they dare; but I cou'd never hope to be  
 ' join'd to the *General Assembly*, and Church, &c. above,  
 ' if I shou'd willingly, and out of Choice, cut off my  
 ' self from any part of the Body, or refuse, upon truly  
 ' Catholick Terms, to hold Communion with 'em (a)  
 ' And upon this very Principle, it is, that many Protestant  
 ' Dissenters, do and may justifie both their *Occasional*  
 ' communicating with the Church of *England*, so called,  
 ' and their not daring to do it constantly. But seeing  
 ' the *Honourable House of Commons* are of another Opinion;

---

(a) See Mr. Robinsons, Mr. Flemings, and Mr.  
 Norris's Sermons on the Death and Funeral of the late  
 King.

## The New Practice of Piety. 59

That my *NEW PRACTICE OF PIETY* may have the Approbation of that Grave Assembly, I shall conclude it with—*A SATYR upon the House of Lords, for their Throwing out the Bill against Occasional Conformity.*

I can't but think *this Title [A Satyr upon the House of Lords]* has given the Reader some Impatience to know *what sort of a Fellow I am.* Why truly, I shou'd reckon it a mighty Honour, if he thinks me capable to give him Satisfaction upon this Head. There's many a *Hackney-Writer*, who has got no Principles, and upon Consequence, can't account for 'em. I am none of those who weave out their Brains into 8 s. per sheet, nor has any *Projecting Book-seller* given me a Hint of this Matter. If a Negative Character wou'd serve the turn; I am no Church-Papist, I hate the very Accent of the word; I am under no Obligations to the *Tool* at *St. Germain's.* I had never the Head-Peice to make a *Plotter* in all my Life. I never form'd any Designs of being Rich and Great. I was never in any Office of Profit, nor have I the least Desire of being so.—My Life is very far run already, I only wish the last Act of it may be free from *Tragedy*, that I may leave the World in a peaceable way, without much Reason to be angry with it, and that I mayn't finally miscarry. But may my honest Reader object, *Is your Satyr upon their Lordships, so very consistent with your New Practice of Piety, with your way to Heaven between all Extreames,* that you cou'd not leave off, till you had libell'd the *House of Peers?* Don't argue too fast, I beseech you, 'tis below the Reason of a Man, to cancel at one Dash, all the *Lines of Christianity*, which have cost him so much Pains to draw. I shall advance nothing but upon so sufficient Arguments, that I hope you'll leave me as much a Christian, and altogether as well dispos'd, as you found me. But to proceed to ————*The SATYR upon the House of Lords, for their Throwing out the Bill against Occasional Conformity.*

The *Occasional Bill* has been twice thrown down as a *Fort-Ball* for the *Lords and Commons* to play with; indeed the Latter were at the Expence to furnish the *Materials*; all the Misfortune of it lay here, that their *Lordships* had a Negative Voice, and so the Play broke up.

N

People



People are pleas'd to say, the Commons were troubled their Bill shou'd meet with so unkind Treatment, when it must be own'd (say the *High-Flyers*) *there was so much Reason, Religion and Law, at the Bottom of it.* There is a Generation in the World that are perfect Step-Fathers to the Hints they receive from others, merely because they han't been so happy as to start 'em themselves; but this at the same Time is an Argument, both of Pride and of Insufficiency. I shan't presume to say how far the Bill might have gone forward, had it made it's first Appearance in the Upper House. There is something like a *Physical Antiperistasis* in the Humours of Men, especially when they are rais'd into some certain Circumstances. Who knows but our Co—hs might have been the *Fanaticks*, upon such a Supposition as that? But what am I saying? When Men have got a Set of Things they call *Principles*, their Actions for the Future, are always Uniform, and consistent with 'emselves. And I'm sure the whole Management of the Body of the *Commons*, from the beginning to the end, has been all of a Piece; there's no *Trimming* in it, they han't minc'd the Matter; they have been at *Westminster*, at *Home*, and have met again, and yet they're always of the same Opinion. And what greater Argument of Steddy Principles than such Behaviour as this?

But to enter upon the Merits of the Cause, and to make a Judgement what their *Lordships* deserve for throwing out the Bill, I shall confine my self to these Particulars. First, I shall consider the Occasion of this Occasional Bill. Secondly, I shall look a little particularly into the Nature of it. Thirdly, I shall consider the Tendency of it, and what Designs might possibly lye conceal'd at the Bottom. Fourthly, Whether the present Posture of Affairs ben't inconsistent with the Nature of such a Bill. These Heads of Discourse shall all along be manag'd with Reference to their *Lordships* Conduct.

In considering the Occasion of the Occasional Bill, I shall tell the Sense of the *High-Flyers*, and shall discover how these Furious Gentlemen, and their Brethren the *Perkinites*, SATYRIZE the House of Lords, for their throwing out the Bill against Occasional conformity; altho', (if we'll believe *LEGION's* Address) by this Pious and Noble Act, the House of Peers have preserv'd Three Kingdoms in Peace,

## The New Practice of Piety. 61

Peace and Union, and justly merit Immortal Honour.

1. The *Occasion* of the Bill (say the High-Flyers) seems enough to make as many Votes for it in both Houses, as there were Persons well affected to the Church establish'd.——It seems there are a set of Men in the Kingdom, who by Reason they serve GOD according to their Consciences, and the best Light the Word of GOD does afford 'em, have unqualify'd 'emselfes for any Office of Profit, or any place of Trust. These Gentlemen, with Regard to the *Test Act*, and rather than want such Offices of Profit, or such Places of Trust, have qualified 'emselfes by receiving the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, according to the Manner of the Church of *England*; this they have done for once or so, making Religion, and such a Solemn Sacrament as this, no more than a Staulking Horse, to compass their Designs, either of Riches or of Honour. And as these persons have come occasionally into the Communion of the Church, so they have occasionally left it, and continue in Communion with their Respective Conventicles. The Members of the House of Commons being fill'd with Indignation, that Religion and the Communion of the Church shou'd thus be made the Objects of Contempt, and become no more than Prostitutes for the Service of base Designs, have twice (*but with some Alterations and Abatements to show with how much Temper they were furnish'd*) drawn up, pass'd, and sent to the House of Lords, a Bill to prevent this Hyp critical Practice of *Occasional Conformity*. Their Lordships, (at least the Majority of their House) have not been in the Humour, either the first or the second Time, to comply with the Motions of the House of Commons And, continue these High-Flyers (but with how much of Reason, let the World judge) that they little expected their Lordships considering the sacred Characters of many of 'em shou'd have been so coldly affected, for the security and the Honour of their Church. Their Treatment of the Bill is Argument enough of the very slender Regard they have for the Temple of the Lord, the primitive Simplicity, and the best constituted Church in all the World. Is the sacred Memorial of the Death and Sacrifice of our Savi-

our, a Business to be trifled with? Must it be made the Foot-stool of Honour and Preferment? shall Men dispense with their own Principles, and come and trample upon an Ordinance of vast Importance, and all for a salary of so much *per Annum*? Shall the Bosom of the *English Church* be thus expos'd, and bare to receive all Comers, and shall Men alter, go off again, make Breaches in the Communion, and prosecute their own Factions and their Schisms, at the Expence of all Religion, and the safety of the Government? Shall a *BILL* to prevent these Abuses be well form'd, and Penalties assign'd for such as shall leave the Communion, so soon as they have swallow'd the Sacrament? Shall a Bill of this Nature be sent up to the *HOUSE OF PEERS*, and shall the *Pillars both of Church and State* be the first that shall throw it out?—Thus far the *High-Flyers*, in their Satyrizing the *House of Lords*, and in defending the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

However in a Business so publick, and of such Importance, one wou'd Imagine their *Lordships* shou'd have something to say for 'emselves (which never was, nor can be answer'd) with Reference to their *throwing out the Occasional Bill*: As,

First, That the *Dissenters* are altogether as good Subjects, and wish as well to the present Government, as those who are in stated Communion with the Church. They as heartily oppose and abjure the Prince of *Wales*, as any you can Name, they are perfectly well satisfy'd with the *Succession to the Crown*, as by *Law* establish'd. They are as thankful for the *Reformation*, and as watchful against Popery, as you can wish.

They pay their Taxes very chearfully, they perform the Duty of the Offices they enjoy, with as much Care and Conscience as can be expected. If the Sacrament be impos'd as a Test, to qualify, and they comply with it, Where's the Harm on't?—I confess here's the Appearance of Reason on the side of their *Lordships*, and tho my Arguments fall short upon this Head, yet who knows (had we Eyes to see it) but there was great *Occasion* for such a Bill.

Secondly,



Secondly, May their *Lordships* argue, To remove all Occasional Conformity, wou'd be the ready way to throw the *Conforming*, and the *Dissenting Subjects* at a greater Distance than they are, and Destroy all Hopes of a *Comprehension* for the Future. The Dissenters are not altogether insensible of the Usage they meet with, and 'twou'd be an odd way to win 'em over, to tye 'em within Church-Communion, by Penalties and Acts of Parliament, when we see them *occasionally* coming within the Church upon their own Heads, some out of Conscience, and others that they may be serviceable to the Queen and Government. Their *Lordships* wou'd gladly be inform'd what great Prejudice the Church receiv'd, in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, by suffering the *Papists* occasionally to communicate? She excus'd the Peers from their Obligation, to take the Oath of supremacy, she made 'em *Privy Councillors*, and *Lords Lieutenants*, and employ'd 'em in Affairs of the greatest Consequence. This Method drew over so many Catholics, to the Church establish'd, that his Holiness saw a Necessity of putting a stop to it. And what mighty *Mischiefs* have we to apprehend from a Number of Honest well meaning Protestant Dissenters, that have no such Prejudice against the *establish'd Church*, but they can *occasionally conform*; and by leaving the Church thus open, to receive them, what Numbers have turn'd their occasional, into stated Communion?

We see that this is a Step, by which many come over intirely to us, and the Children of others, do enter into a constant Communion with us! And shall we go to cast a Scandal upon this, or discourage it? By Occasional Conformity the Numbers of Dissenters are abated, by a moderate Computation, at least a fourth Part, if not a Third.—Bishop of Salisbury's Speech.

Why, 'tis certainly so, there is something (unanswerable) under this Second particular, but (continue the *High-Flyers*) must the *Two Houses of Parliament* suffer the Dissenters to do Evil, that good may come?

However, I leave the House of Commons, to turn their *Lordships* Management on this Head, into SATYR; for really, tho' I say it, I am a little inclin'd to Moderation, and Unity.

Secondly,

## 64 The New Practice of Piety.

Secondly, Having thus given the *Occasion* of the Bill its due, we are now to consider the Nature of the Bill itself—

Secondly, *The Nature of the Bill, which their Lordships have thrown by*, may best appear from the Penalty annex'd, by the House of Commons, to the Crime of *Occasional Conformity*. And here I can't but take a very fair Hint of the Tenderness, and good Disposition of our Commons, in Regard, the first Time the Bill appear'd the Penalty was much severer than it was the second. *One Hundred Pounds, and five Pounds for every Day, that such a Person shall continue the Execution of his Office, after he had run his Head into a Conventicle*, was something more than only fifty Pounds for the same Offence. 'Tis plain the Commons were not so hot upon the Matter, and so much out of Humour, but they could make Abatements, where their first Demands had any Face of Persecution and Severity. And alas! say our *High-Flyers*, if *Occasional Conformity* be a Crime, Wou'd they have it prevented at a cheaper Rate? Wou'd they have the Government (and the establish'd Church) secur'd upon easier Terms, than Fifty Pound comes to? Laws without Sanctions are Things altogether useles and insignificant, they can neither give Hope or Fear? Obedience and Disobedience, in such Cases, are neither the better, nor the worse, than they were before.

Their Lordships, (continue these *High-Flyers*) it seems, wou'd have remov'd the Crime, but they cou'd not approve the Punishment, like over-indulgent Mothers, rather than use the Rod, they'll suffer the Children to act just as they please, till they ruin both themselves, and the Families they belong to. These are methods full of Tenderness indeed! Let a *Man* play fast and loose with Religion, stretch his Conscience to what Size he pleases, he shall never smart for it—Thus far our *High-Flyers*. But methinks 'twou'd be worth the while, to hear what their Lordships can say for 'emselves, upon this Particular; and

First, They argue from the *PREAMBLE*, to the Bill, as it came abroad, 1702. The words are these, *As nothing is more contrary to the Profession of Christian Religion, and particularly to the Doctrine of the CHURCH OF*

EN G

ENGLAND, *than Persecution for Conscience only; in due consideration, &c.* Now if the Genius of Christianity, may their Lordships say, and especially the Doctrine of the *English Church*, be so unpersecuting, and so mild, why must a Fifty Pound-Forfeiture be exacted of Men, because they Worship GOD according to their Conscience! *Conscience and Christianity, it seems, are good Friends, and never lay Hand upon each other; but the mischief of it lyes here, the Christianity of the Commons wou'd gladly restrain and persecute the Conscience and Christianity of Dissenters.* If there's any other Reason, than only Conscience, let us know what it is? *Don't Dissenters in Office, discharge the Duty of their Posts, as well as other Men? Have they practic'd any ill Designs upon the Church and State? And if they are thus well affected, and upon Occasion, will come over, and communicate with our Church, where's the Harm on't? Shall we treat those with the utmost severity, that come nearest to us, and are not only embark'd upon the same Bottom, in all the Essentials of the Christian Faith, but are partly Symbolizing in Things indifferent?*

Why truly, I can say little to this matter: But 'twou'd seem the *Christianity of their Lordships, and the Christianity of our Commons*, are something of a Different Complexion, and that they're mutually Dissenters to each other; tho' perhaps all of 'em may have receiv'd the *Elements*, according to the same Rites and Usage.

Secondly, Their Lordships argue thus upon the matter, that the *occasional Bill*, with a Fifty Pound Penalty, does manifestly make an Inroad upon the *Act of Toleration*. The Design of which *Act* was to exempt all *Protestant Dissenting Subjects*, from suffering by the Force of certain Penal Laws; now shou'd such a Penal Bill pass, the *Toleration* might indeed remain a Bauble to please Children, but Men of sense wou'd have other Thoughts of the Matter. *Was the Toleration remov'd, then the Mask wou'd pull'd off, and the management expos'd.* To talk of maintaining involably the *Toleration-Act*, and in the meanwhile to pass the Bill, is but to tie up the *Right-hand*, and smite the Dissenters with the *Left*: Wou'd it not be a mighty satisfaction to a Man, when one has robb'd him

to,



to bid him be easy, there are good Laws in Force, which won't see him wrong'd? Let the *De Jure* of it be where it will, the Man is sure, he's robb'd *De Facto*; Laws, shou'd matters go at this Rate, wou'd be much like *House-hold-stuff*, some for Ornament, and some for Use.

If this be the State of the Case, and the Commons be for dropping the Toleration Act, I shall e'en drop 'em too, and crave leave to come off from this Second Particular, by the Strength of their own Reason.

I shall next consider the Tendency of the Bill, for I design to be pretty short with their Lordships. And who (say our *High-Flyers*) that has the use of *Five Senses* cou'd ever Imagine but the Tendency of the Bill, was to secure the Government, that Power might be only lodg'd in the Hands of Conscientious Church-men, and that such Persons who wish and pray for a Revolution, might have their Hands ty'd up, and so be reduc'd to a Civil Kind of Impotency. I wou'd have provided for the Honour of the Church, that her sacred Institutions might not suffer by Hands and Means, that are covetous and prophane. Indeed their Lordships Resist of the Bill, whose Tendency is such, must needs fill up their Characters with **THE BLACKEST LINES**, and the Religious part of the Nation, must certainly take the Hint, and open their Mouths, upon such Occasions as these.—Thus far the *High-Flyers*.—But as every Cause has two sides, we shall take Notice, how their Lordships can turn and represent the Matter, and

First, Their Lordships may be suffer'd to say the indecency of Zeal, with which the Commons have push'd forward the Bill, was Argument enough of some latent Persecuting Design, at the Bottom of it, and upon Occasion some of the Commons have sufficiently shown 'emselves; Witness the literal Piece of Malice, which you have in a Printed Speech for the Bill, the words are these. 'And are we afraid to disoblige a Party of Men that are against the Church and Government? Whose Principle of Hatred, and Malice to the Family of the Stuarts descends to 'em by Inheritance? Men that offer'd open Violence to her Majesty's Royal Grandfather; Men that have not only the

Impudence

## The New Practice of Piety. 67

Impudence at this time, to justify that Fall, but to turn the Day of his Murder into Ridicule, and keep a Calvary Head Feast in the City. And can we imagine, that those who are Enemies to Her Majesties Person and Office, and that were for hindering Her from coming to the Throne, would not be glad of an Opportunity to shove her out of it? — The Bishop of Salisbury has given us fair Intimation of his own suspicion, of something that would follow upon it, 'tis true he don't tell us The Pretended Prince was regarded by the Promoters of the Bill; but Men that know sense, will very easily make a Conjecture that way. — In the Interval between the two last Sessions, I remember that being in Company with a Member of the House of Commons, and discoursing with some Freedom, upon this Subject, he told me 'twas very Apparent, the Promoters of the Bill had something more in their Intention, to which the OCCASIONAL BILL was no more than the Introduction. DOUBLE INTENDERS may serve up in the Stage, lest the Modesty of an Audience should be shock'd; but they all suit the Characters of the representing Body of the Nation.

Secondly, Their Lordships are very positive the Natural Tendency of the Bill, was to create Division and Discord among her Majesties Subjects. The Dissenters can't be suppos'd to be insensible, and if so, they must upon Consequence have resented such Treatment as the Bill would have given 'em; and tho' the Dissenting Body might not have run into Extremes upon this Occasion, yet the Ferment would have work'd silently within 'em. And the Policy of it seems wonderful, that the Government and the Establish'd Church cou'd be secur'd by Methods that directly tend to disaffect and disremember, so vast a Body of her Majesties Loyal Subjects. Strength and safety in Bodies politick, as well as natural, consist in Union and good Disposition; therefore say their Lordships, we cou'd not so far give up the Interest which Her Majesty maintains, in the Affections of her People, merely to gratify a WHIM, which was the most warmly promoted by Persons who have hitherto deterr'd no better Title than that of Jacobites; and upon their own Principles can't be suppos'd so true to the present Government, as those whom they'd incapacitate to serve her Majesty.

68      **The New Practice of Piety.**

I can offer nothing against their LORDSHIPS, upon this Particular, without Violence to my own Reason, and the TRUTH AND JUSTICE of the Cause.

Thirdly, *Their Lordships have something farther to offer as a Consequence upon the Discord and Disunion the Bill wou'd create, that 'twou'd cut off all Thoughts of a COMPREHENSION, for when the Minds of Men are ruff'd with hard Usage, and ill Treatment, there's no working upon their Reason at such a Time. And the Passing the Bill, wou'd show we had worse Apprehensions of 'em than they really deserve, as if their paying worship to GOD in an unceremonious simple way, was so great a Crime, that it immediately render'd 'em unworthy to be concern'd in a Civil Sociery; And for this Reason, an Aged and Learned Prelate, was pleas'd to say, in the House of Lords—That it was well known by some Books he had formerly published that he had been no great Favourer of the Dissenters, but since that Time, he had met with an Opportunity to know 'em better, and he must own he found 'em to be Men of greater Moderation and Piety than he formerly thought 'em, and as he was now Antient, and had but little Time to live, he thought himself oblig'd to do 'em this Justice before he dyed.*——In these words (or to this Effect) this *Finnis Bishop* was pleas'd to express himself; so that 'tis plain, from his Lordships Sentiments, and the Throwing the Bill against Occasional Conformity out the House of Lords, that the Tendency of the Bill looks a little dangerous and ill Natur'd.

*In the last place here's yet, the Season when this Bill appear'd, which I must acknowledge the last Refuge, upon which I can build a SATYR against their Lordships.*

The Season seems a little Dangerous, 'tis true, and the great Issues of War are uncertain, let the Alliances be what they will; and this wou'd seem to furnish Argument for throwing out the Bill against Occasional Conformity.

But say our High-Flyers——*If the Church as well as Civil Liberty lye at Stake, 'tis without Question, very seasonable*



## The New Practice of Piety. 69

ble to pass a Law for the security of it; and what Thoughts can we entertain of those LORDS, who put a Stop to such a Design? The COMMONS indeed, had other Business upon their Hands, but has any Part of it been left unfinish'd? And if they cou'd find Leisure under so pressing Circumstances, to attend this glorious Piece of Service, What acknowledgments do we owe them for it?— This for the High-Flyers.— But now their Lordships come up with their Reasons, and 'tis but CIVIL we shou'd give them the Hearing, and they urge the Matter Home after this Manner, Don't the French King equally design the Ruin of the Church-Men and Dissenters? He has no Indulgence for the one, or for the other; and are they not equally concern'd to maintain the Reformation? And can this be the Season to persecute each other, when the greatest Union and Affection may possibly prove too little? The Factions within the Walls of Jerusalem, were a great Instrument of Ruine to that devoted City, when they had the greatest Necessity to joyn Hearts and Hands against the Roman Forces, that were battering down their Walls. And one wou'd imagine a too near similitude between the Circumstances of that unhappy People and our own. What Dependance can our ALLYES have upon us, shou'd we go together by the Ears at Home? Shou'd we look back upon the Roman History, we shou'd find this to have been a stated Rule in Policy, that even in Times of Persecution at home, when any considerable Danger threatned the Empire from abroad, the Flames immediately were extinguish'd, and all was Peace and good will, till the Ruine from abroad was blown over. And shall we begin to read backwards, the best Politicks of other Nations? Shall we divide at Home, that Conquest may be ours abroad? The very Hint of this Management is enough to put Life and Courage into an Enemy.

I'm now oblig'd to acknowledge very fairly, I have lost my LAST HOLD; I have written my self into a Convert, and a Friend to their Lordships, and but that the TITLE is printed off, I should certainly make Amendments to it. The Reader may  
NOW

## 70 The New Practice of Piety.

now make the Judgement for me; if this SATYRE on the House of Lords be inconsistent with my New Practice of Piety, or the old way to Heaven, newly discovered.

FINIS.

### Advertisement.

ON the 30th of this Instant May, will be Publish'd—The New Athenian Oracle, in Three Parts, viz.—1. The Divine Oracle: Or, a Directory for tender Consciences. In this Part the Questions of a more Speculative Nature, shan't be over look'd—2. The Philosophick, and Miscellaneous Oracle, where Poems that are sent us shall be inserted, and Poetical Questions answer'd in the same Faculty—3. The Secret Oracle, discovering the Arcana Nature, but refin'd from every Indecency that wou'd disoblige the most modest Reader.

The Members of NEW ATHENS, in a late Advertisement, have given the World a Promise of This New Athenian Oracle, to be continu'd in a Weekly Paper: But upon Second Thoughts they see Occasion to take new Measures: There are a great Number of Curious, and uncommon Questions, sent to Mr. Smith's Coffee-House, in Stocks-Market, since the Publick had Notice of this Design; and a Weekly Paper wou'd oblige the Members to write too much Extempore, and not give 'em Leisure enough to search after Truth, and to make those Observations and Experiments, which many Cases may require—This New Athenian Oracle, will therefore be continued in Parts, 6d. each, till the Question Prop'd is compleated.